

RABIO LEPUS

Cute PC Engine bunnies and it's not even Easter!

Get this for an off-beat game scenario. Rabio Lepus is a conversion of an obscure Japanese coin-op in which you control a rocket-powered missile-firing bunny rabbit equipped with a pair of boxing gloves.

Some nasty aliens with pointed ears and tridents have kidnapped two beautiful bunny girls and your rabbit king. It's enough to send anyone hopping mad. So you immediately launch a rescue mission in a spacecraft shaped like a cute bunny rabbit with floppy red ears and large buck teeth.

Rabio Lepus is a multi-stage horizontal parallax-scrolling shoot'em-up with quite a bite. Standard alien space soldiers set the stage for



EEK! The dreaded Tongue Monster of Thring! Rabid Rabbit must face a number of similarly odd monsters on his mission.



The original Rabio Lepus coin-op is so unknown I've only ever seen it in one arcade. It's still a good game though. The same goes for the PC Engine version, the game presents you with quite a few difficult sequences to blast your way through. Those just-one-more-go and wonder-what's-next syndromes will keep you hooked till you've finished the game.

ACE RATING
849



PC ENGINE

Only superficial differences separate the PC Engine and coin-op versions of Rabio Lepus. Great graphics, the colourful explosions are particularly impressive. Only two things annoyed me: the horrible soundtracks which cannot be switched-off and the game continue option throwing you right back to the start of the current stage. Things like this can make you seriously depressed.

RELEASE DETAILS

PC ENGINE

£34.99

OUT NOW

No other versions planned

some imaginative and unusual guardian sprites such as a four-legged beast and a white ghost who looks just like Casper from the spooky cartoon series.

Your tough armoured bunny (it can take three hits) is armed with endless cannon fire and a limited supply of missiles. Carrot canisters are located at strategic points throughout the scroll-scape, shoot them and a power-up pops out. These collectibles include missile ammunition packs, bonus money bags and life-saving carrots. If you get too close to an object, your bunny automatically gives it a left hook.

If you really dig your bunny sprite you can even buy a cuddly real-life replica from the Japanese software developer. I've already ordered mine.

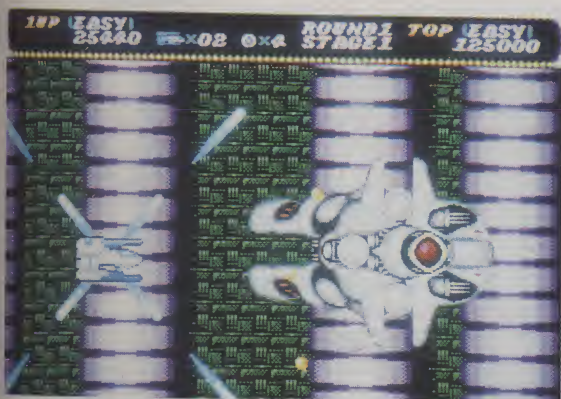
• Rik Haynes



Woo! This end of level fellow may not look especially tough, and indeed he isn't. A couple of hits will ground him.

HELLFIRE

Is this NCS/TOAPLAN Megadrive shoot a scorcher?



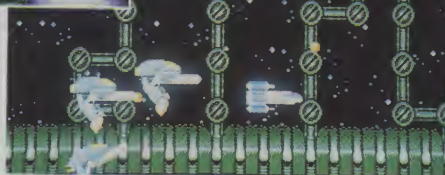
Blasting one of the guardians with full directionals.

Psychoic aliens are blasting you in all directions," tell me something I didn't know. This four megabit cartridge packs a six level horizontally-scrolling shoot'em-up with some of the most amateurish graphics I've seen in a Megadrive release.

The only novel feature of the game is your ability to blast sprites in multiple directions. Your spacecraft can fire forwards, backwards, up and down, and at four angles at the flick of button C on your joystick. In addition to these weapons, you can fire a megablast beam and collect extra firepower.

With very little in the way of variety or fun gameplay, Hellfire is strictly for dedicated joystick jockeys with cash to burn.

• Rik Haynes

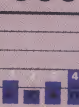


The colour of your ship denotes your current direction of fire.



The makers of this cart must have been stumped for some graphics designers when they produced Hellfire. This is the first time I've ever had to fly a chunky slice of sprite and shoot fish-heads, and I hope it will be my last. On the upside, the visuals are bright and colourful. Audio is split between thumpy sound FX and bouncy soundtracks.

ACE RATING
600



SEGA MEGADRIVE

When that nice chap Mr Upchurch told me this was a coin-op conversion, I was shocked. I'd never seen Hellfire in any arcade and couldn't believe it would take that many 10p's. Hellfire isn't that bad, but it's not much better than average. The only original feature of the game is the selectable firing directions of your ship - it's hardly worth buying a shoot'em-up simply for this facility. Thunderforce III still ranks No.1 in the Megadrive horiz shooter stakes.

RELEASE DETAILS

MEGADRIVE

£34.99

OUT NOW

No other versions planned



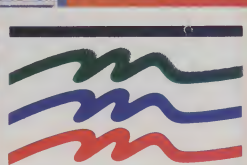
FOR

games

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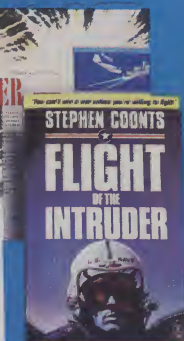


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Hanging on for dear life as guy the gorilla prepares to punch your lights out.

The Eastern Block Communists may have fallen from power last Christmas, but this hasn't stopped Capcom from converting its comie-bashing coin-op onto Sega's 16-bit baby. But is Megadrive *Strider* as good a conversion as US Gold's effort on the Amiga? You bet it is!

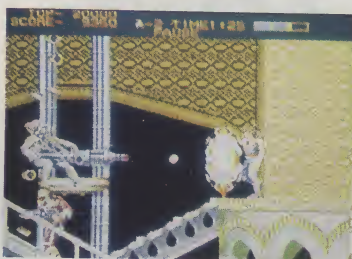
Set in the middle of the next century, *Strider* is a way above average scrolling platform arcade game. You control the nimble Strider spy on a mission to steal Soviet secrets from deep inside the Russian countryside. Unfortunately, the Russkies have other ideas and throw a myriad of obstacles, KGB agents and mechanical monsters to halt your every step. You have the choice of three, four or five lives per game and each life can take three hits.

Your silicon persona is very agile and can crouch, run, leap, crawl and tumble. You can still look after yourself despite being armed with a mere sword. This weapon produces a super-fast beam of light which destroys almost everything in its path. Along the way, you can improve the range of this sword by powering-up on a pick-up. Other desirable things to collect include extra energy hit points, automatic weapons pods, electronic eagles and temporary invincibility. The walking weapons pods are useful little chaps who wander the entire screen (and just beyond the on-screen boundaries) taking out any enemies they meet. If you already have two pods on the go and pick up a third, you get a much stronger robotic panther. Though you must remember this robobeast is a little daft and will stand still while being blasted to bits.

Strider is split into five individual stages – each has different obstacles, monsters and backdrop

STRIDER

CAPCOM's classic coin-op finally strides over to the Megadrive



This meaty gun will soon make mincemeat of our hero. Hint: try to get as close to the baddie as possible when you jump down to this level because he can't take that many hits.



They say the neon lights are bright in the Kremlin.

5
interest level

hour day week month year

MEGADRIVE

ACE RATING
919

10 10
5 5
G 10 A FF

MEGADRIVE

The individual audio-visual style of *Strider* leads you into its simple but highly addictive gameplay. Each of the five stages requires a different tactic to complete, so the game should last the first month-out in terms of constant play. This adaption of *Strider* even surpasses the high standards set by the Megadrive conversion of *Golden Axe*. If you want to play arcade-perfect conversions of the best coin-op's around, the Megadrive seems to be the machine of the moment. Roll-on G-Loc...

RELEASE DETAILS

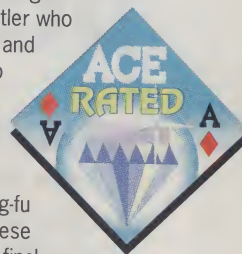
MEGADRIVE £40.00ct OUT NOW



The Politburo has adopted a new political style... the armoured centipede party.

visuals. You start the game flying a microlight glider into the Kremlin. Here you meet tall and small KGB soldiers wielding knife-edged assault rifles, a big Russian wrestler who revels in throwing you into walls, and finally the centipede-like Politburo armed with a giant hammer and sickle! The next level is also filled with surprises from a giant guy the gorilla made from steel to acrobatic but deadly kung-fu girls. Don't hold back because these are just simple precursors to the final stage where you get the chance to ride a dinosaur!

When it comes to graphics and sound presentation, this conversion really scores. Capcom's graphics designers have produced a beautiful



example of their art. The noticeable amount of sprite glitch is the only graphics minus point. *Strider* has 32 exotic musictracks with titles such as *Siberian Tunnel*, *Mass of Cloud*, *Gravity Unusual*, *Uroboros – The Iron Ruler* and *Mosque the Cold-Hearted*. Every tune has that distinctive Japanese feel for FM synthesised sound. Sound effects comprise of 38 individual FX and eight sound samples of Japanese screams, speeches and sniggers.

This latest Capcom coin-op conversion is one of those 'must-have' games cartridges. Buy it, plug it in and shock your friends with the quality of not only this adaption but also your Megadrive. *Strider* is the best use of eight megabits this side of a Technotronic sound sample.

● Rik Haynes

Thanks to PC Engine Supplies (0782 712759) for supplying the cart.

BURNING FORCE

Has Namcot found tapped a new vein of excitement in the tried and tested 3D formula?

No they haven't. Burning Force despite some visually pleasing touches is really rather dull and doesn't even surpass Space Harrier 2, one of the first ever Megadrive titles.



Swooping to collect a laser weapon (bit of a bad choice actually - the lasers are useless).

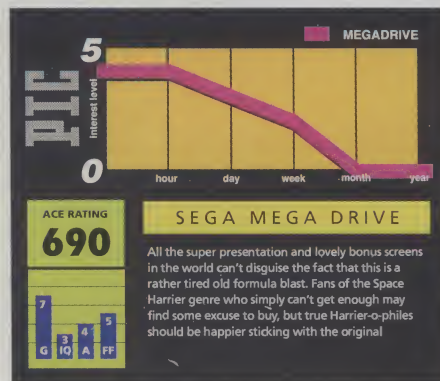
Screaming across the carpet-patterned plains aboard your jet-bike, you must (for the umpteenth time this month) do battle with the awesome forces of the alien scum-lord.

Originality? Nil point. Still, a "re-working" of a game we've all seen before isn't necessarily a bad thing. And Burning force does offer some nice touches.

For a start, there are some really terrific weapons to be had. By flying over large coloured balls, you'll collect the appropriate power-up. The missiles are the best. You start the game with rather spidery homing missiles but they can be beefed up into whopper spinning green spheres which cycle around, inflicting massive hit points on anything in its wake.

The bad guys basically consist of three types. There are formations of flying horrors which swoop on from the sides. There are bigger aliens which drift out of the screen towards you and there are stationary towers which fire missiles at you.

At the end of each stage, surprise surprise, a massive beastie swirls around and using the top secret information passed on by some Space Corps general, you must zonk it.



The difficulty level can be set to easy or hard (nice to see lots of gradation here) and the number of lives can be incremented to a maximum of five. Reasonable information. Shame we've seen it all before.

● Jim Douglas

This game was kindly supplied for review by PC Engine Supplies



Head to Head with the first end-of-level bad guy. A few rockets up the exhaust-ports will do the job.

CYBER-LIP

The NEO-GEO goes 'droid hunting

Mankind is under threat from alien forces, and so scientists have designed a series of powerful combat 'droids, controlled by a huge central computer, and sited them on an outlying colony world. As usual, the techies can get nothing right, and before you can say "What on Earth does 'Cyber-lip' mean?" the computer has gone berserk and the droids are running amok.

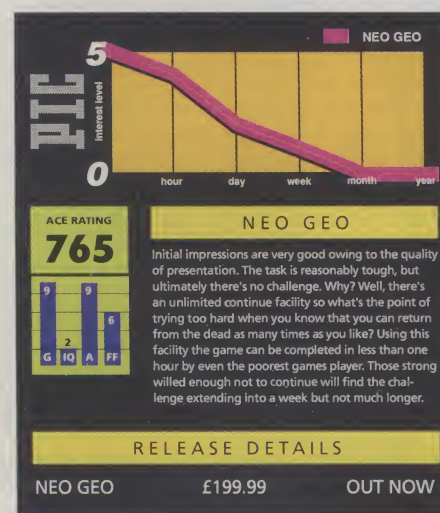


This bouncin' 'bot causes no end of headaches - especially when he shoots you in the bonce!

The game is basically a forced scroll shoot-'em-up, with you controlling a well-armed beefy hunk who can run left, right, jump, crouch, cling to the ceiling and, of course, shoot. The rampaging robots attack from all directions, and you must waste them as best you can. Some 'droids leave behind bonus weaponry when killed, such as grenades, flame throwers and missiles, which can be toggled between to select the one best suited to offing your current opponent.

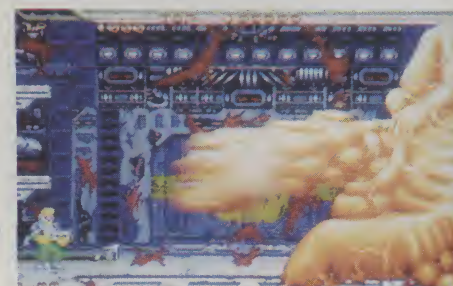
Along the way there are buildings and rooms to enter where you can replenish your limited ammunition supplies. At the end of each level is a now de rigeur huge guardian, which must be pumped full of lead until it gives up the ghost, and allows you access to the lift shaft and the lower levels of the complex, taking you nearer to your final encounter with the haywire computer.

The parallaxed back-grounds scroll smoothly in every direction, and the screen is constantly swarming with enemy sprites. Digitised speech messages and warnings are shouted at you throughout the game. Technically it can't be faulted. The



gameplay? Well, it may be totally unoriginal but it's still mindlessly enjoyable.

● David Upchurch



An end-of-level baddy lunges at you, or should that be lunches on you?

DO YOURSELF A FAVOUR SLOT THESE INTO YOUR



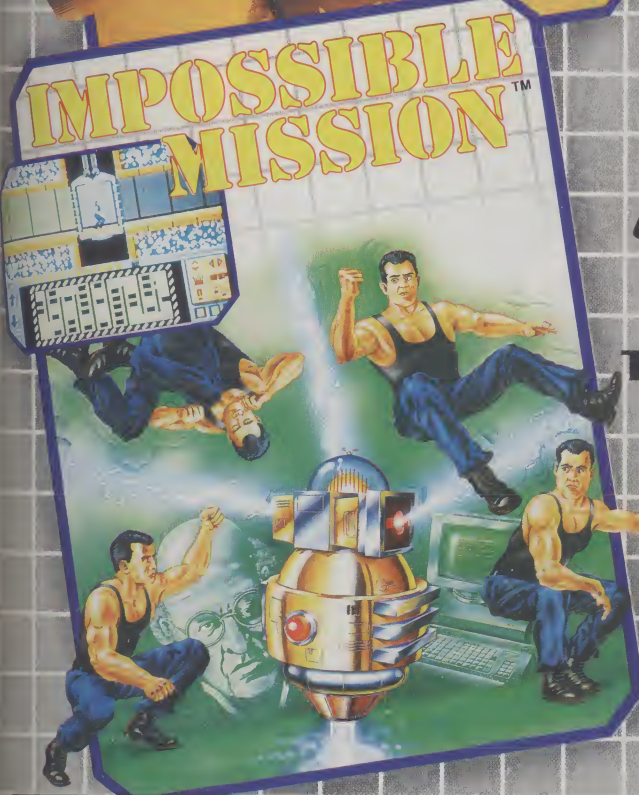
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Digital Integration

PIPE DREAM

Go with the flow on your Gameboy

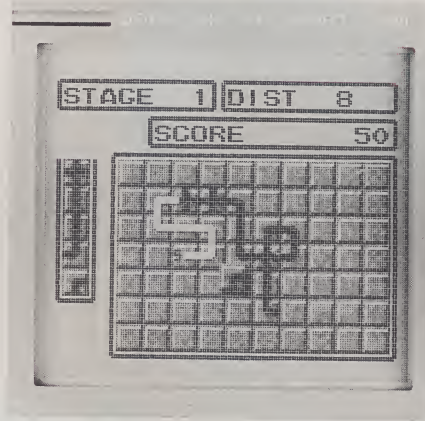
cally scrolls into view on the left of the screen. These pipes are basically divided into corner, across, down and crossover sections.

You simply place the current pipe piece onto the grid to create some pipeworks. If you can produce looping pipelines you get bonus points. Mistakes can be rectified - at the cost of points and crucial time. A distance counter acts as a time limit, if the flooz is still flowing by the time it reaches zero you can move onto the next stage. *Pipe Dream* is divided into 36 stages.

On later stages in the game you start getting obstacles which cannot be destroyed, reservoirs which slow the flooz down and pipe pieces with directional arrows (the flooz can't flow against the direction shown).

Pipe Dream is the sort of game that can ruin personal relationships. Excuse me while I just have one more go.

● Rik Haynes



Lay that pipe quickly or you'll be down the tubes yourself!!

FLOOZ FACTS

Pipe Dream, called *Pipe Mania* in Europe, was written on the Gameboy by Bullet-Proof Software - the same guys who brought us the Gameboy conversion of *Tetris*. The Assembly Line provided the original game design, with Entertainment International and Lucasfilm Games adding their own gameplay and presentation ideas. Many thanks to Eli's Ian Higgins for lending me his personal copy of Gameboy *Pipe Dream*... just don't expect it back, Ian!

VICTOR MUSICAL INDUSTRIES produces a goldmine of a Gameboy release

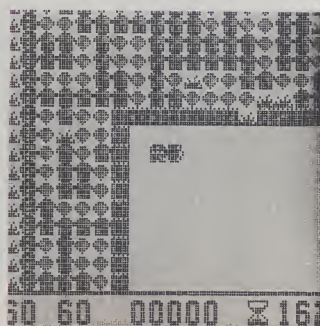
This version has been split into four separate areas: the original caverns, arctic, jungle and underwater.

This change has been for a pure aesthetic reason because every object and character performs the same function no matter what their shape or form.

Instead of boring boulders you get penguins, huts, Easter Island statues and snapping jaws.

Gameboy *Rockford* is slightly faster than his C64 cousin which is handy for getting you out of tight spots. The game is packed with features including five difficulty levels and a two-player link-up option

● Rik Haynes



Dodge the boulders and find the diamonds - so simple, it's beautiful!



Pipe Dream has immediately become one of my favourite Gameboy titles. It has that addictive un-put-downable quality, and it's got it bad. The game will appeal to anybody who can produce logical plumbing works under pressure. Do you think you could pull a stroke of creative pipe genius just as the flooz is about to ooze? There's only one way to find out.

ACE RATING

910

GAMEBOY

Essentially the same as the other versions, Gameboy *Pipe Dream* includes a few minor modifications, most noticeably the absence of the bonus games (which have been replaced by rather tedious interlude animations which you can't skip), you can't see the piece under your 'cursor' and, most irritatingly, you have to reenter the password every time you play the game. However, you can link two Gameboys for simultaneous plumbing with a friend.

RELEASE DETAILS

GAMEBOY

\$29.99

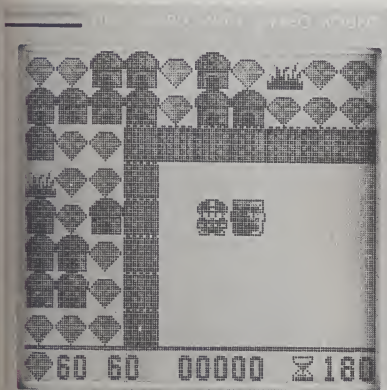
OUT NOW

A slimy green liquid called 'flooz' is about to invade your Gameboy unless you can reroute its journey through some fancy pipe construction in yet another simple, but infuriatingly addictive, arcade puzzle game just waiting to soak up every second of your leisure time.

The construction site is divided into a 10x7 square arena. Each square can hold a single section of pipe and it's your job to construct a pipeline for the flooz to flow through. The available selection of pipe pieces automati-



BOULDERDASH



The graphics may lack the size and colour of their home computer cousins, but that all-important gameplay transfers without a glitch.

Rockford, the cute character from First Star Software's classic C64 game *Boulderdash*, has resurfaced on the Gameboy thanks to a leading Japanese console company. But does he look good in monochrome?

You control Rockford as he mines diamonds from a four-way scrolling maze of caves, arctic wastelands, jungles and underwater before a time limit expires. While digging a path through the ground, certain obstructions, such as walls, stop you in your tracks. Digging round a boulder will make it fall down. If you happen to be in the

way of any tumbling boulders or diamonds you lose a life. As you progress through the game you encounter nasty butterflies (?) who follow you around trying to kill you with their lethal touch and amoebas who can be both a help and a hindrance.



You won't be able to put the game down after 15 minutes of play. Like *Tetris* and *Pipe Dream*, *Boulderdash* is a must-have for fans of the arcade puzzle game. Nobody has managed to surpass the *Boulderdash* way of things in the game's six years of existence. People looking for addictive gameplay and a lasting challenge should go for *Boulderdash* in a big way. Games like this put the class in classic.

ACE RATING

908

GAMEBOY

You won't buy *Boulderdash* for its looks or sounds; the gameplay counts for everything in *Boulderdash*. Beam Software, the veteran Australian games software developer, has only fiddled with a few features from the original. The new wide-view option of the surrounding area is useful. I miss the weird title tune from the C64 and Atari versions - you win some, you lose some!

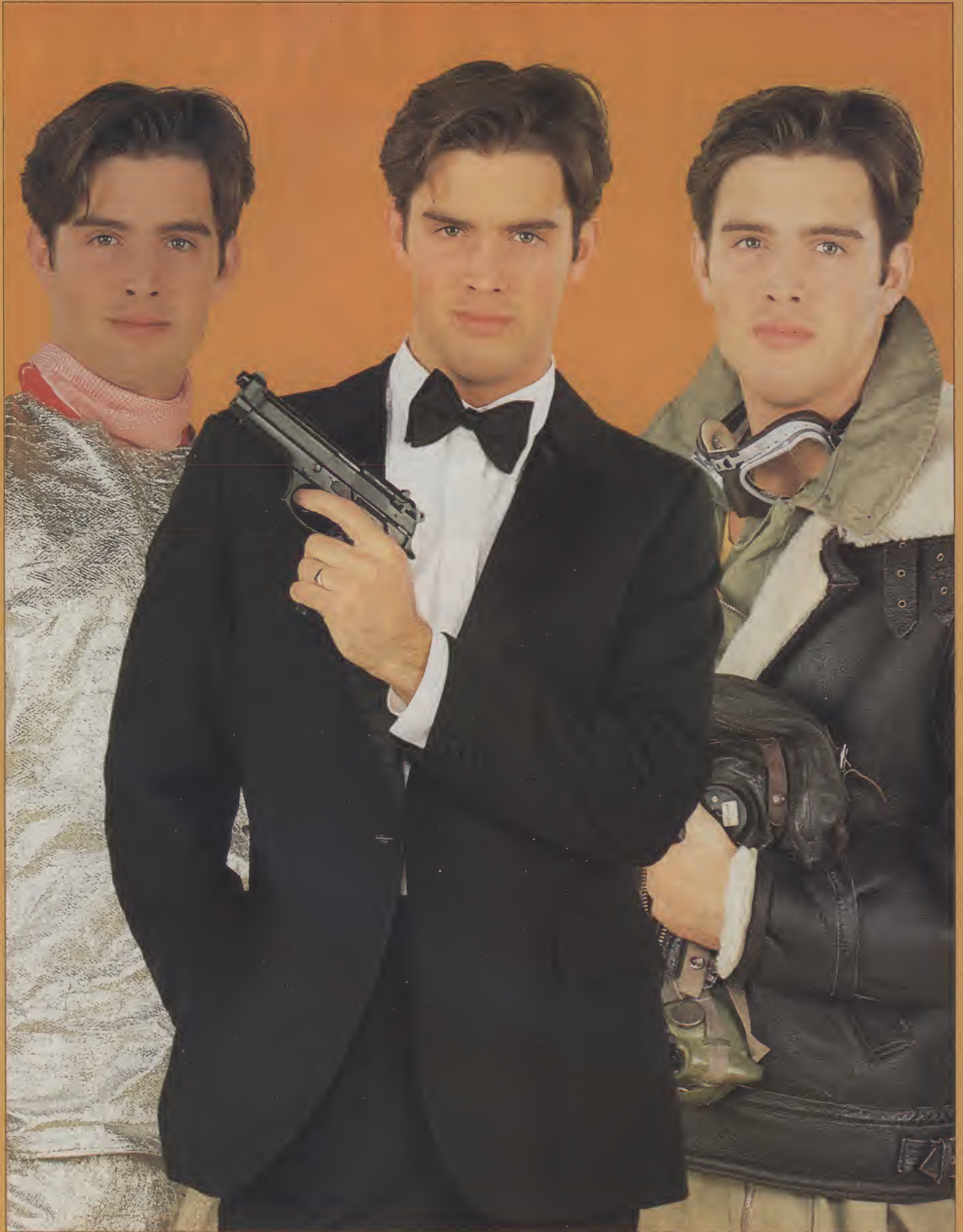
RELEASE DETAILS

GAMEBOY

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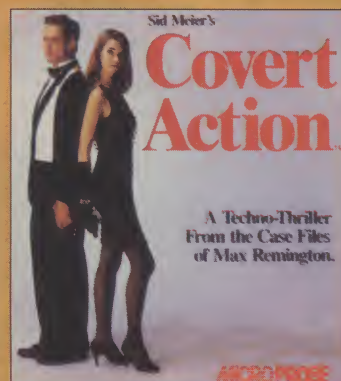
THE PAST

The date is 1914, and you are a British, American or French flying ace of World War I, attempting to take out Axis pilots in hair-raising dogfights and shoot down Zeppelins before they can cross the channel. "Knights of the Sky" is historically accurate, allowing you to use more sophisticated and powerful aircraft as you move towards 1918, navigating by map and compass, just like the real aerial combat pioneers of seventy five years ago. You can even end up challenging the the best hot-shot pilots that Germany could put into the air, such as Oswald Boelcke, Max Immelman, or even the great Baron von Richtofen, the Red Baron himself. "Knights of the Sky" features MicroProse's acclaimed 3D graphics system, further enhanced and improved, taking the flight sim genre into a whole new era. Available initially on IBM PC compatible machines, Atari ST and Commodore Amiga versions will follow shortly.



THE PRESENT

The 1990's are the age of international crime, terrorism and espionage - and you are the clandestine superspy charged with travelling the globe to combat these forces in MicroProse's new techno-thriller, "Covert Action". Using the latest electronic bugging techniques, high tech intelligence sources and good old fashioned clue hunting, its up to you to identify the ringleaders and bring them to justice. Become expert in wiretapping, decipher acquired information with the aid of sophisticated code-breaking programs, and use surveillance to complete the picture. And if your technological know-how, cunning and luck ever let you down, you've always got the latest combat weapons such as CS gas, stun grenades and compact sub-machine guns to help you out. Across Europe, the Middle East and Central America, with 16 cities to cover in each area, you'll have your work cut out to make sense of the allegiances between numerous terrorist groups, known political activists and foreign spies, all undertaking "Covert Action". Available for IBM PC compatible computers.



THE FUTURE

The end of the 21st century. The Earth is an ecological wasteland. Nuclear meltdowns, climate alteration, species extinction; all have taken their toll. Humanity must evacuate its mother world, to give the Earth time to recover from the devastation wrought by past civilisations. The human species has left Earth in immense transport ships. You are the pilot of a Trailblazer series dreadnought, sent ahead of the main ships to prepare an alien star cluster for human colonization. You must find a planet suitable for humanity and obtain the resources the fledgling colony needs to survive, by mining them from unclaimed worlds or through interplanetary commerce with friendly aliens. You must make the cluster as safe as possible for human families by making friends and eliminating enemies. Flying at incredible speeds through deep space, the many lifeforms you encounter will see you, quite correctly, as the alien. "Lightspeed" is MicroProse's first space simulation and it is one which will set new standards by which others will be judged. Original music scores and the latest in 3D light sourced graphics provide the stunning technical backdrop for your journey as you fight, trade, and talk your way towards your goal of finding a new planet for your people. "Lightspeed" will initially be available for IBM PC compatible computers.



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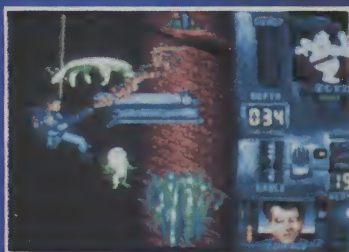


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Everyone's agreed that CD technology is going to make a massive impact on games technology and home computing, but actual CD units are pretty thin on the ground. Commodore's CDTV has now been put off till the Spring (at least in the UK) and the other main contender, Philips/Sony's CD-I, isn't going to be available until autumn 1991 at the earliest.

One of the problems – as most ACE readers will know – is that, for better or for worse, many CD experts feel that FMV (full frame, full motion video) is an essential specification for the system's that will dominate the home for the next ten years. You can find out more about this our Entertainment feature on pages 29-31 of this issue. However, there has been for some time a working FMV system available to manufacturers – Intel's DVI chip set, designed to give FMV in conjunction with a CD equipped PC.

Until now, DVI has been an expensive curiosity but it's now emerged in a revolutionary new package that really shows how CD technology could revolutionise home computing.

TADPOLE POSITION

Empruve's Cornucopia is a compact workstation for home and business that has several highly original design features. Dominating the package is an A4 aspect ratio monochrome display accompanied by a 4" colour LCD.

This means you get the advantages of colour and a very high resolution display (together with fast screen handling)

TECHNO BRIEF

MONO DISPLAY	10" black on white backlit FST LCD 640*480 resolution VGA standard
COLOUR DISPLAY	4" backlit TFT LCD 480*240
AUDIO	2*4" hi-fidelity 'near field' stereo speakers
PROCESSOR	386
RAM	1 Mbyte
STORAGE	Built in 20/40 hard disk, CD ROM, and optional 4 Mbyte floppy drive



The Cornucopia in action – but at £2000 it's going to be a bit pricey for the bedroom

CD Future

An American company have launched a compact CD full motion video system that points the way to the future of home computing.

Here's the exclusive ACE story...

simultaneously. The 4" screen can either display an independent image or can show colour highlights from the mono display.

The innovation doesn't stop there, however. You also get a special joystick type controller (the 'Tadpole') that features three buttons and an analogue stick. The monitor is mounted on a swivel enabling you to use the system either in upright (small footprint) desktop mode, in 'book' orientation, or horizontally to give you a landscape format display. There's also a sampling feature that allows you to add 'voice' notes during use.

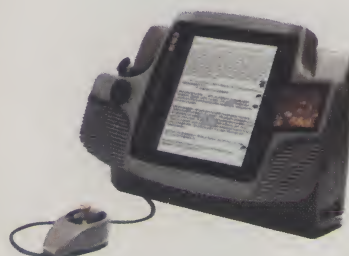
Another neat feature is the control panel. Most multimedia systems clutter up the screen with icons, but Empruve have made these a hardware feature ranged alongside the monitor. Program developers get fifteen icon panels that are completely reconfigurable in software. Each icon has been carefully chosen and together the options are pretty comprehensive.

The first five icons have obviously been included with hypermedia applications in mind. Called Key, Door, Room, Shelf, and Content they present a control metaphor for exploring databases or interactive hypermedia packages. Using DVI, these packages can combine video, audio, illustrations, and program routines. There's even a hardware 'bookmark' icon that enables you to leave up to 50 tags in a database for instant retrieval.

CD's obviously have good audio capabilities, so the Cornucopia boasts sophisticated stereo audio circuitry with twin loudspeakers mounted on either side of the monitor together with a headphone socket. Add an optional keyboard and you can use the machine as a conventional PC with VGA graphics and CD ROM capability. Add a tuner and you've got a TV.

Software for the Empruve should start appearing in early 1991 – at the moment the system is being considered by encyclopaedia publishers as a possible 'electronic book' version of their products. When the system is made publicly available, it should cost between £2000 and £2500.

It's only a matter of time, however, for the Cornucopia concept to reach down into the more affordable home market. Meanwhile, the design of this machine should serve as an inspiration for other hardware manufacturers – the future of multimedia must not be confined to hardwiring different media platforms together into complex spaghetti junctions. What's needed are more units like this, where audio, video, and interactivity are properly integrated into one system. Well done, Empruve.



The unit in 'monitor' orientation and...



...in 'book' configuration

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THE 1990 ATARI ST PRODUCT GUIDE

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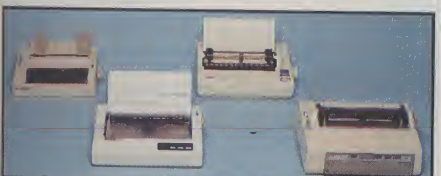
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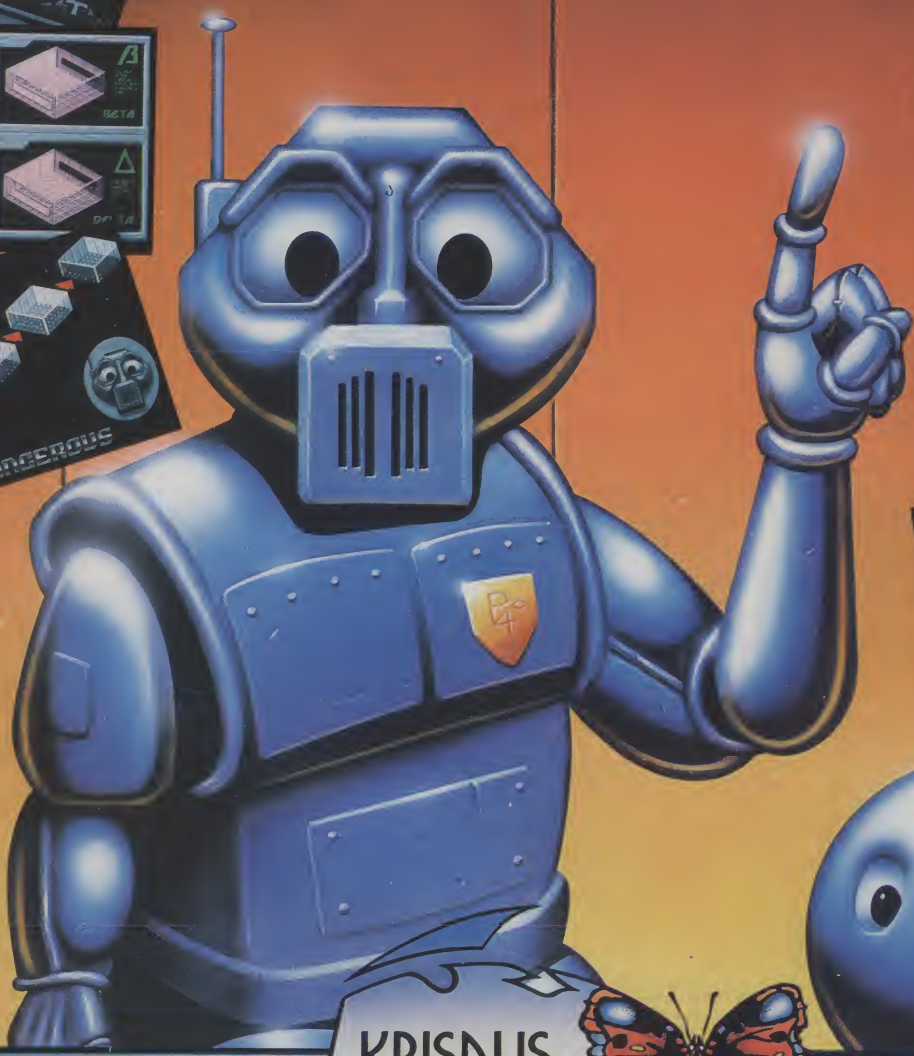
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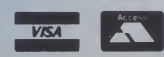
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Midwinter on the PC

PC

MIDWINTER

Rainbird £29.99; Atari ST version reviewed Issue 32; ACE rating 948

In the post-apocalyptic winter which has engulfed the world after a meteor strike, civilisation is protected by a small party which has colonised what were the Azores. With the aid of available technology and transport, and a security force, the FVPF, they must protect themselves from the attacks of hostile forces and environmental threats.

Midwinter is a big game concept, and the accompanying background booklet is thick and detailed. You control up to 32 interacting characters, using a wealth of option screens to select parameters and functions. Midwinter features excellent solid-3D animations, either from your viewpoint as you ski around the island, or from the cockpit of various land and air vehicles.

The training options have been expanded on the PC to include practice on different vehicles. Gameplay is complex and absorbing, and the combination of action and strategy ideal for the dedicated gamer rather than for the fan of a quick blast.

The colourful VGA graphics are on a par with those of the Atari ST, the EGA graphics almost are, and animation is smooth and swift. There's very little disk-swapping even if you're running from floppies. Sound too is well implemented, with AdLib and MT-32 supported. A top-class conversion of an excellent title.

PC RATING: 950

SPECTRUM

RICK DANGEROUS 2

Microstyle £9.95; Atari ST version reviewed Issue 38; ACE Rating 870

The difficulty with platform games on the Spectrum is that if you use too much colour, attribute clashes make it difficult to judge your position. Rick Dangerous 2 manages to make good use of colour in the backgrounds, but keeps the main character monochrome to minimise these problems.

The screens on the Spectrum version are flip-scrolling, but the action is very much the same as other versions, with all the platforms, ladders, lightning bolts, roving aliens, deathtraps, obstacles and



Rick Dangerous 2 on the Spectrum

RICK DANGEROUS 2

Microstyle £9.95; Atari ST version reviewed Issue 38; ACE Rating 870

It's been argued that the Commodore 64 is better suited to this sort of platform-and-ladders action than some 16-bit machines, and true enough Rick Dangerous 2 look really good on the 64. The sprites are colourful and well-defined, the scrolling multidirectional, the animation smooth and fast, and the control extremely precise and accurate.

Gameplay is almost identical to that of other versions; the way in which Rick jumps towards you out of the screen, bawling his little head off as he falls to his doom is particularly amusing. Music and sound effects are top class, but the tape loading system is



Rick Dangerous on the C64

very long-winded and a disk version is recommended if practical.

C64 RATING: 889

CPC 64

BUCK ROGERS: COUNTDOWN TO DOOMSDAY

S.S.I. £24.99; Amiga version reviewed issue 39; ACE rating 885

Sci-fi hero Buck Rogers has survived through comic strips, 30's film serials, comics, and even a dreadful TV series; in his latest incarnation he's a TSR role-playing game character, and SSI's

game is closely based on the scenario and gameplay of the RPG.

Frozen in the 21st century and thawed in the post-apocalyptic 25th, Rogers finds himself caught up in the battle between the evil conglomerate RAM and the Earth forces of Neo.

The game comes complete with a paperback, First Power Play, an instruction manual and a Log Book giving RPG-style character attribute tables, weapons modifiers, species information and floorplans.

The C64 version is supplied on three disks, which can be freely backed up. The game itself has an enormous amount of variety; after defining and modifying your characters, which you will need to save to a blank disk, you go through an introductory routine explaining the plot and objectives, then you're plunged into an attack scenario.

The gameplay alternates between movement sections (with small 3-D pictures of the surrounding area), information displays, and combat routines with portraits of your enemies and animated fighting. Control is by keyboard or joystick, using menu options at the bottom of the screen.

As with many RPG's, though there are some excellent pictures, graphics and sound take second place to atmosphere and background, of which there are plenty. The C64 version is understandably slower than 16-bit version, but retains the complexity and engaging detail.

C64 RATING: 875A

pitfalls you could expect. Sound is fair, and overall, though Rick 2 doesn't set any new standards, it's a well-above average Spectrum title.

SPECTRUM RATING: 850

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CAPTIVE

Each of the ten bases which must be destroyed in order to escape your galactic prison has its own distinct design and layout. Each is populated by an individual selection of aliens. Before you can enter a base, you'll have to find your way "across country" from the landing site to the base entrance.

The first level is actually fairly simple once you've mastered the operational functions of the droids and the Brief Case Computer. It involves 10 small to medium sized bases and a relatively easy space station to rescue yourself from. A normal player should complete level 0 after a couple of weeks.

You have to land on the planet Butre (008W 072N). Zoom in on the planet and click on the large white dot. Click on **ORBIT** and The Swan (the droids' ship) will make its way across space and orbit Butre. While the ship is en route, it's a good idea to initialise your droids.

Click with the right button on the droid's **STATUS** icon to bring up the back pack. Click on the computer chip with the left button and deposit it on the droid's brain (left side of droid's head). This will initialise the naming system where the player can type in a name for the droid. The name acts as a personality generator that creates the droid's wisdom, dexterity and vitality stats.

Repeat the above for all four droids and you'll have the team ready for action.

By this time The Swan should have arrived. Click with the right button to bring up the main view again. Click again on the landing sight to program the drop destination and then click on the **LAND** icon to start the drop.

Once the lander has landed you will see a picture of the first level's planet. Have a wander around the world and get used to the control system before attempting to enter the base. Don't walk into the water because it's highly toxic.

To enter the first base: walk up to the door and pick up the clipboard found near by (use the left mouse button on the object in the main view to put it in the player's hand). Holding it in the hand will allow you to read it on the info screen. This will show the combination of buttons to press in order to open the door.

Once open go inside and you will now be in the base itself. Pick up the explosives and the clipboard.



Walk to the far end of the air-lock and use the **PUSH** control to move the wall and get into the first area of the base. (**PUSH** is achieved by pressing the RIGHT mouse button on the **FORWARD** icon).

There are many ways of completing the game. Here's one way of attacking the problems. You will find a style suited to your skills and it may well be different but will achieve the same results.

You'll find new areas of the base to explore once you identify which walls push and which don't. Look out for the ones with rollers at the bottom.

● Explore the level completely, examine every nook and cranny and open up every cupboard you can find.



Mmmm....nice. The Quest for Tears has been on hold for some time but it's back with a bang. Here, a lovely selection of garments from the fantasy collection, sported by your

How many phone calls? Are you lot finding *Captive* tough or what? Well, now help is at hand thanks to the super chaps at Mindscape who have kindly put together a Level 0 tipsheet for us. So let's get on with it.

● Collect all the gold you can find dropped by the dead aliens. Use this in the shops to buy, sell and repair objects. If you've damaged an item of the droid's body,



Captive

● For the first base it's a good idea to concentrate on increasing your brawling skills only. This makes you a fabulous puncher and is sufficient for the enemies that you will encounter. If you must buy a weapon, then we recommend the ball. It's reusable and fun!

● Devices are plugged into the droids and give a read out on the monitor at the top of the screen. A good device to get on this base is the route-finder. This is only available from one shop so you might have to search for it. It's classified as an "optic". There are seven types of optic device. Buy with trial and error until you find the route finder. If you buy the wrong one you can always sell it back for no loss.

● The shops in a base operate a co-operative banking system. This allows the player to leave any gold he collects at one shop, and the funds will be available at any other. However, remember to retrieve the money before you blow the base, otherwise you'll be somewhat out of pocket.

● Find the professor in the computer room for the clue to the next planet's location. Kill him for the password into

the computer. Click on the computer to activate it. Type in the password to reveal the planet probe. Collect this (it weighs a lot, so select the carrying droid carefully) and you're ready for the destruction of the base.

CAPTIVE CLUES

Collect all gold dropped by the dead aliens.

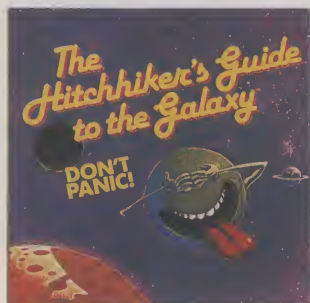
- Open every cupboard, they were put there for a reason.
- Find the computer.
- If the password is not accepted by the computer, there will be another.
- Doors will not function when generators are blown, so keep them open.
- Powerpoints run dry when generators are blown so get power first.
- Make sure you're well armed, fixed and fully powered before you leave the base. You may not find a weapon shop for some time.
- Use powerpoints as a weapon.
- Players with higher dexterity hit harder and better.
- Players with higher vitality dodge hits better.
- Players with higher wisdom gain more experience.
- Map well.
- Initiate all droid chips.
- Never leave a base without a planet probe.
- Throwing heavier objects will inflict more injury, although there will be some objects too heavy to lift.
- Remember to go up skills (very important in the early levels as skills are gained fast).
- Save your game often, and be sure to number each one differently. You may do something silly like lock yourself in.
- The green air lock will not let you out until the generators have been destroyed.
- Avoid using tindron heads.
- Don't just stand there in a battle, keep on the move. Use the keypad for faster movement.
- Make notes of what each shop sells. This is very important as you are to save money.
- A left side attack will only attack aliens on the left, whereas the back party will attack down the middle, left and right.
- Put your leader at the back. This means there is less chance of his head being knocked off (!).
- Use doors to squash aliens.
- Don't ever get caught under a raiser wall.

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● The first level is pretty easy. It's best used as a training ground. Kill anything that moves to gain experience. Make sure you spend this experience on the skills for each droid. Use money to buy devices and ball weapons. Mines are good to use as well. Use money also to repair any damaged body parts.

● Once you have explored all of the first base, go back to the generators and blow them all up. After a short pause they will start to explode, now run like hell! Use the route finder to get back to the door. Click on the door to get into the lobby. Use the same combination as before to get out safely but don't hand around because the base is exploding around you!

● Once outside, go back to the ship and press UP to board. You can then orbit the planet and go back into space. Put the planet probe on the planet map and watch it go to the next base. Land there and continue. Good luck.

SHADOW OF THE BEAST 2

Alright! Enough is enough. Even with the help of last month's tip, you folks just don't seem to be able to make any headway with Psygnosis' graphic romp. So for the first and last time... **THE WHOLE SOLUTION!** Special thanks to Russell Lazzari and Philip Baxter for this.

Start the game and go left through the trees and towards the bridge (now loads). When at the bridge, wait at the edge until the highest fish comes from the left and jump onto the bridge and keep jumping until off the other side. Do not kill the person being held by the beam but kill the guy holding him. Ask the person who you save about "traps" and he will tell you which switch to push. Then fall into the hole to the left. Walk left and turn around and kill the bats. Do the same for each step down. Go to the bottom of the rope and jump left. Don't fall in the acid. When a person firing at you appears then duck down and keep on shooting until he falls off the edge. And do the same for the next person.

Collect the energy bottle and use it if necessary. Enter the house and go left up the stairs and collect the ale. Go out of the house and go back to where you started from. This time there are no people or bats. Continue going right until you meet the pygmies. Jump towards them over the spears they throw and kill them.

Do the same for the others until you get to a log floor where a pygmy is flying above you. When he moves to each corner jump up and hit him with your weapon, now do as before with the other pygmies. Keep going right until you find a rope. Jump onto the level above next to the rope and keep

on jumping onto each level going leftwards.

When level with an enemy go left until you are behind the chest of coins and kill the enemy. Collect the coins and the axe he leaves behind. Jump onto a short rope hanging from above. Keep on jumping up until you're next to a solid lump of slime. Shoot the slime and go right and collect the coins and the energy bottle. Go back down to the ground level and left until under a short level. Underneath there's a hole with twigs on top. Jump and fall through the hole. Go down.

Go to the edge of the floor next to the water. Jump across and fire at the same time to shoot crystals which appear from the water. Press the relevant function key for axes and walk over the bridge. A man will run away. Follow him until you get onto the steel drawbridge and jump up to kill the drawbridge winder in the top left corner (NOT the two people above you). Go back along the drawbridge and kill the last man. Shoot the stone door until it crumbles away. Go left and jump onto the light and up again until you see a sign saying "Spikes" (to the right next to the light).

Climb the light and shoot the switch next to the sign and quickly run to the left until you come to a sort of house area. Shoot left and hit the switch. Run back before the time runs out. Never stay at the

other end. As you have only 3 seconds, this may take several attempts. Run back and down one level, then go left and fall onto the chain holding up the lights for the four men sitting below. Fall off the rope between the four men and shoot each one.

Go right and collect the key. Go back and jump onto the chain again (don't shoot the guards coming towards you) and wait until the guards are below you. Jump to the left past the guards and under the cage which falls onto you. You can now do nothing until you are in jail. Phew! That should be enough to keep you going. More *Beast* next time!



OP STEALTH

Sweat trickled from his brow... it was hot... too damn hot. Tension high, nerves tingling. He could feel the hairs tap dancing across the back of his neck. Only one thing for it... he'd have to read the third instalment of Delphine's Operation Stealth solution.

Struggling past the arcade sequence, you should find yourself in front of a door...

OPERATE the door and walk through into an office.

EXAMINE statue and **OPERATE** statue arm - you should now see a safe.

USE the little box on the safe. **OPERATE** the on/off button on the box on the main picture.

Cycle through the digits on the safe. If a number is in the combination, you should be acknowledged by a light - make a note of each number (what it is and its position in the sequence). Having established the combination, hey presto! After yet another arcade sequence, you should find yourself aboard an agency sub where you are given a cigarette

case and CD, before once more finding yourself submerged...

Having come to a halt, swim to the left, **EXAMINE** each seaweed plant until coming across an elastic band.

Swim to the right.

OPERATE the palm tree on the right.

OPERATE button.

Swim through the hole and **OPERATE** the porthole.

You will now be captured (**SURPRISE!**)

Time to escape for the third time...

USE the pen on the lock.

USE the watch on the left wall, then on the right wall.

Go to the right and **OPERATE** grill.

That's all for now. *Operation Stealth* will be right back after these messages...



"I don't know what it is, but it's weird and it's pissed off..."

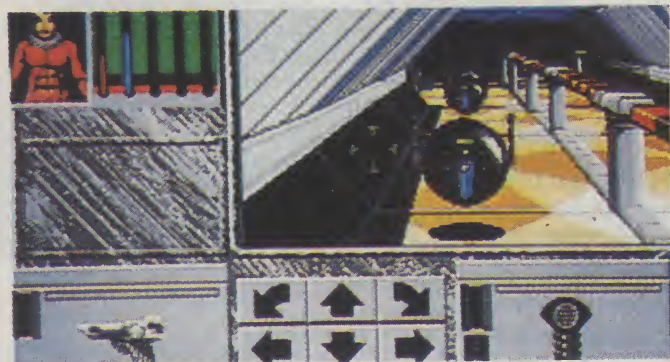
XENOMORPH

LEVEL 7

Make your way to Maintenance, destroying the robot in your path. Take all the necessary chips and kill all the droids. Pick up all the RL ammo and the grenade. Go to ladder M, recharge your weapons and go down. (The chipcards are of little use in the lower levels and backpack space is needed, so leave them here.) Save the game here...

LEVEL 8

Before collecting any objects on this level, it is a good idea to run around blasting as many aliens as possible - the larger of which require mines and grenades to dispatch. Take the card and then the charge (lower left corner of the map). Get the large laser (which you should use from here on) and the charge, and destroy all remaining alien eggs. Exit via N.



LEVEL 9

CORPSES! (Luckily all dead...) Kill both aliens at the start and take the card. Walk to ladder O and take all the cards from the nearby AGU. Drop all cards near the ladder. Visit the armory taking batteries, charges and RL bullets. Recharge at O and descend.

LEVEL 10

Welcome to the maze... Find your way to ladder Q and SAVE before going down... Until next month, bug-hunters, you're on your own.

DRAKKHEN

On and on, the road goes on... trudging through barren lands

alone can be a wearying experience, so all thanks go to Adam Morley's handy hints on gardening... sorry, I mean... Drakkhen. This month, Stage Three jostles for space. Read on, brave adventurer, your quest awaits...

STAGE THREE

Before attempting this stage, one of your character's should have a bow (arch), bought from the swordsmith. Make your way towards Prince Haaggkhen's palace and, on arriving, use your Scout or Mage to cast the unlocking spell (be sure to stand far enough from the drawbridge to prevent your untimely demise) and enter.

Operate the far right symbol to cancel the force field. Go up, unlock the door, enter the next room and turn left. At this point, your weakest character should lead, with the strongest last - it is also advisable to cast a force-field around your magic-users and take

If locked, use the Scout or Sorcerer to cast the unlocking spell - using a key works, but the room beyond will not appear! Find your way to the circular fountain and cast the "light" spell. Position your warrior in front of the fountain and select operate. Your character will now appear in a room with two waves.

Run to the top of the room, collect the armour and weapons, equip yourself and either fight, or run through the door to the left. Go through the door in the bottom wall of this room. Do likewise for the remaining characters (avoiding combat in the case of magic users) bearing in mind that light must be maintained for the portal to work.

Beyond the "wave" room is the main dungeon. You must enter here to trigger certain events. When all characters are gathered and fully recovered in the room below, re-enter the dungeon room. Give the bow to your Priest or Sorcerer and send them into the room on the left - you will come across a powerful Ghoul. Move behind the pillar on the right and fire out with the bow. Meanwhile your Warrior and Scout should be holding back the waves.

Having killed the Ghoul, move all characters around the edge of the room and enter the door at the bottom. **DO NOT** collect the armour. You may now leave the palace and enter the frozen wastes of the North... More next time, Drakkhen fans.

XIPHOS

Yay! Here's the first instalment in a player's guide to Electronic Zoo's Xiphos, straight from the lips of its programmers, SPA. Take it away, boys...

"Xiphos are argumentative little blighters and will pick a fight on any pretext. You've only got to lob a couple of friendly missiles in their direction to have them frothing at the proboscis. And when they haven't got a human to pick on they'll quite happily blast the hell out of each other.

"Even so, you'd hardly think that in a war game you'd be called upon to actually break up a scrap. Well, you'd be wrong. In Xiphos it's divide and conquer all the way. Just find a party where a few Xiphos are engaging in a full and frank exchange of views, locate

the weaker element and drop a judicious missile in its front garden. With the advantage of surprise you can do more damage with a single missile than with dozens when the enemy knows you're there.

"For example, take a typical Xiphos situation: a Pio supply ship en-route between bases got ambushed by a Qon freeloader. A Pio fighter picked up the blip and came over to investigate. By the time you get there the Qon is beginning to feel the strain. You size up the situation, creep up on the Q and foreclose his option to



breathe. Peace (and you're 85 credits better off).

"Once they've noticed you, the Xiphos are much harder to dispose of and you might be forced to reconsider your status as a living being. One of their most uncooperative habits is to pretend that they are running away, get you to chase them and stay an SLU or two out of range, dropping back now and then just long enough to unload a couple of hundredweight of fissionable material in your direction.

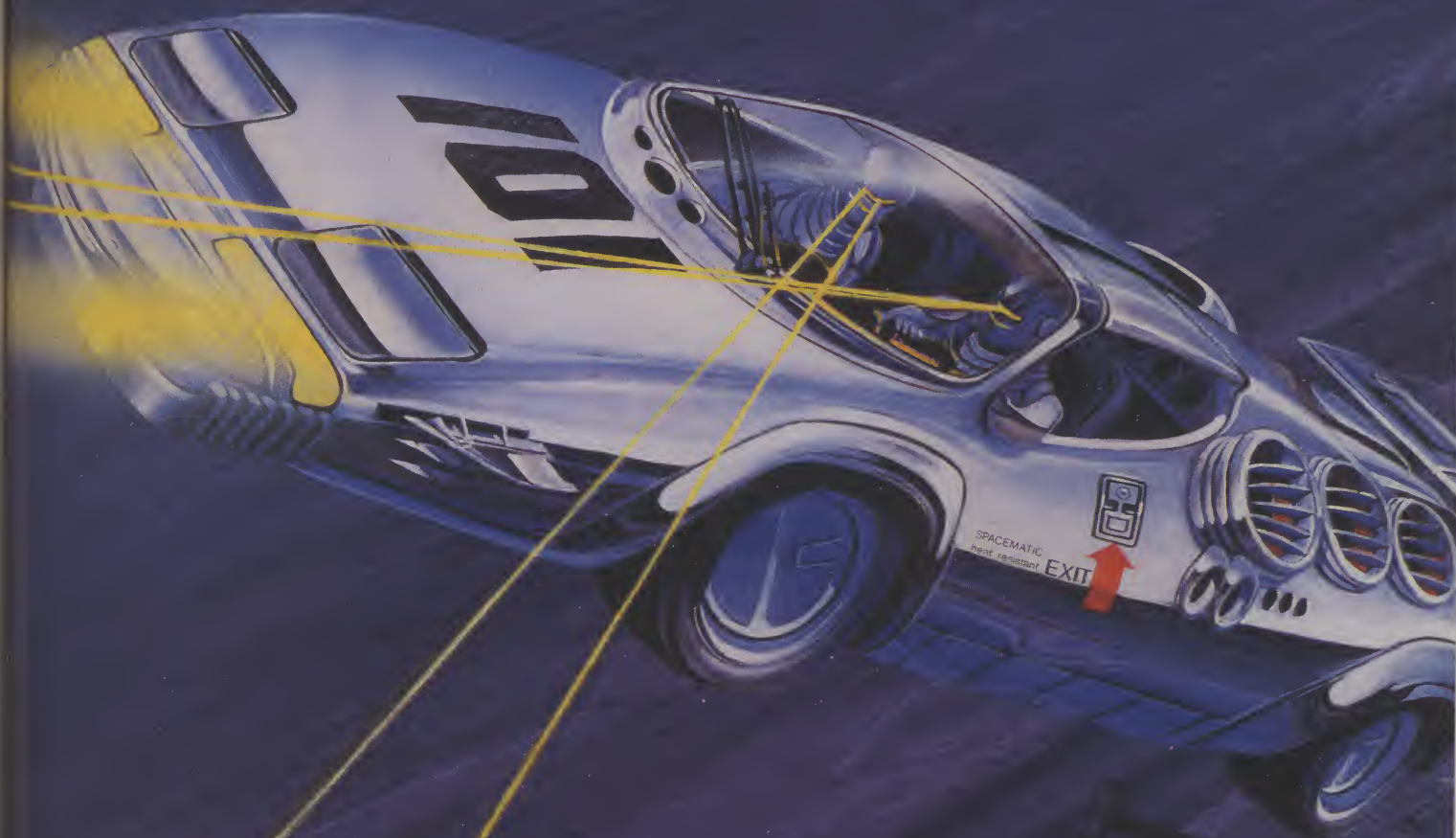
"Of course, if you have energy, then your shields can take it. But if you want to know how to stop their little game, here's the low-down: don't chase, just sit there. Xiphos can't resist a fight and they'll be back, waving their prehensile antennae behind them.

"Even better, turn the tables and have them chase you. Head off after another ship of your own side and play one off against the other. When they're weak from combat you can take out both of them. With a bit of luck you'll have a tasty Xiphon for breakfast.

"One of the best ways to get ahead in Xiphos is to hit the enemy where it hurts the most, in his own base. You might not like relaxing in four atmospheres of neat ammonia but Xiphos love it and bases are about the only places they get a chance to put their flippers up. Find out next month how to do this.

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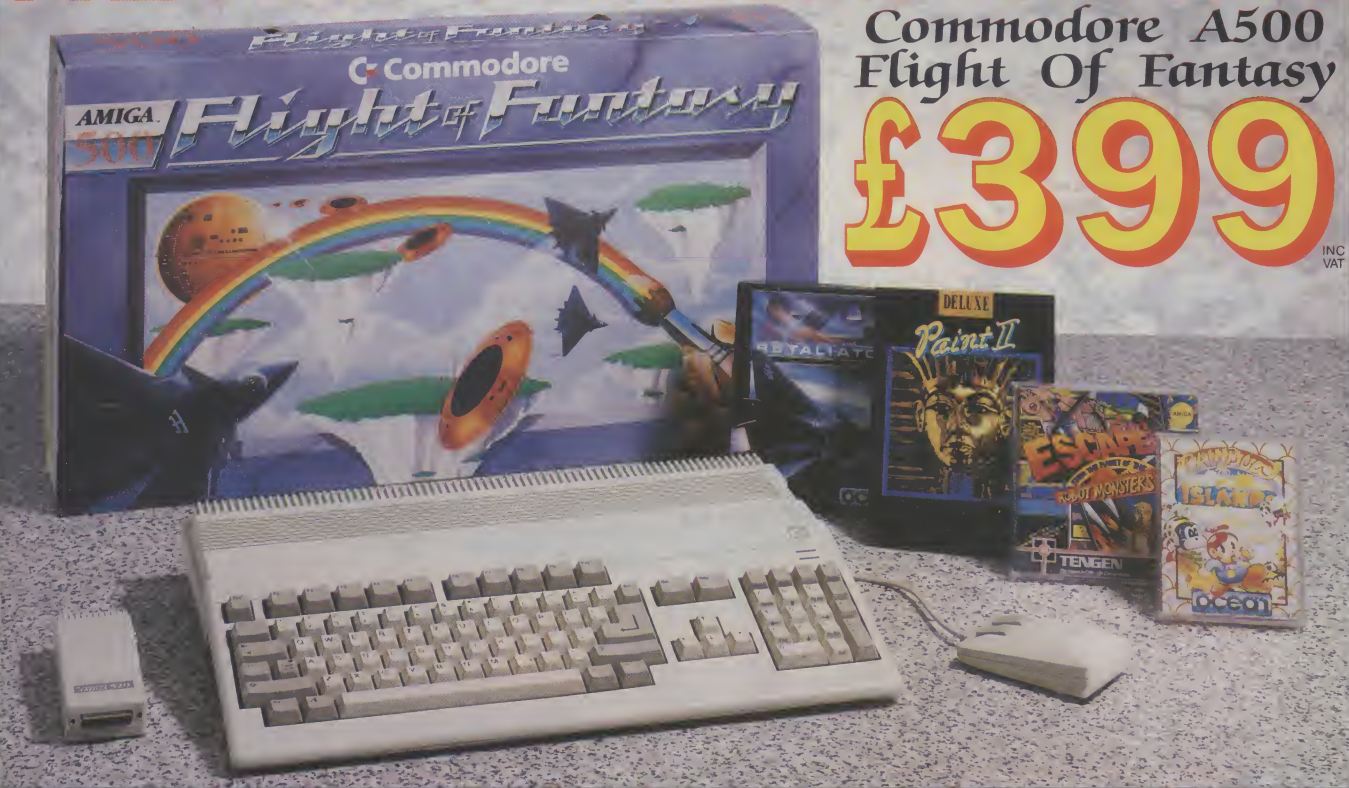
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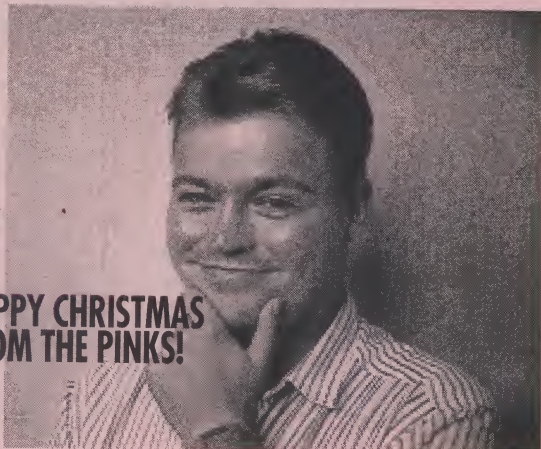
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**HAPPY CHRISTMAS
FROM THE PINKS!**

in the

131 Happy Christmas!

Mark Smiddy gets festive with a brief guide to X-mas rated presents for owners of all micros.

128 ACE Charts

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Diddums wants a littley-whittley Chrissie prezzie, eh? Diddums had better get his act together and check out this games guide, then...

135 Hardware Buyer's Guide

You've decided. Not content with just a computer, you want to wile away the Xmas hours with a console as well. Here are all the hardware facts you need on the hotboxes most likely to burn holes in your budget.

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...to YOUR micro. If you own one of the ten major micros or consoles, there's a section for your computer here as ACE correspondents talk man to machine...

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Small ads, big sales. Your chance to buy, sell and tell the world.

ACE has brought you nearly 40 issues, all packed with info on games technology. If you're missing any back issues – such as this one, covering the Philips CD-I machine – then check out page 176



ACE CHARTS

The ACE Charts give you the definitive list of top scoring games EVERY MONTH – as reviewed by ALL British games magazines.

DID YOU WIN LAST MONTH?

Round 12 entrants failed dismally when it came to Amiga, C64, and PC titles. PC experts didn't realise that the reviewers were likely to be KO'd by *4D Boxing* (and neither did we, to be honest). On the C64, perhaps more understandably, all entrants missed the attractions of CDS' *Complete Games Centre*, and no-one (which perhaps is surprising) thought of *Captive* for the Amiga.

Now for the good news...for some. **Luke Smith** of Birmingham spotted Ivan Ironman Stewart on the Spectrum. So did several other people, but Luke's was the entry out of the bag on the final selection. **Erik de Loas** of The Netherlands spotted two winners – *Cadaver* for the ST and top softco *Magnetic Scrolls*. Erik missed out on the *Cadaver* selection round but struck lucky on the Stockmarket. **Richard O'Brien** of Penn did exactly the same, but his lucky turn came with *Cadaver*. Finally, **F. Sheikh** of Redbridge was one of a very few who spotted *Iron Lord* for the CPC. Prizes for all are on their way.

What you can win...

You'll get a mystery game worth up to £25 for your machine if you can pick out NEXT MONTH'S top chart entries. Get all five right in any category and you'll get £150 worth of software! Entry instructions are opposite.

THE STOCKMARKET

In addition to our games charts, we also have a bit of fun with the figures each month when we produce the ACE Stockmarket. It's a list of the top 25 softcos as determined by the ratings their games are currently receiving. You can see their fortunes rising and falling in each issue...

Having collated all the games reviewed in the latest issues of computer magazines, we calculate the average mark that each publisher received for every one of its games on each format. This is the rating that you see in the second column. So, for example, if the company is great at sourcing 16-bit games but botches up its 8-bit conversions, that will pull down the average mark, even if you can see one of its titles heading up the Amiga, ST or PC chart printed over the page. If all the games are excellent, or if the company has just one brilliant program doing the rounds at the moment, it will consequently have a high rating.

The last column shows how well a company's games have fared compared to the Software Index. This single figure represents the average review mark (expressed as a percentage) that all games, all formats, received during the last month. It's a quick guide to how good the current crop of titles is, and each company's Index score shows how well their games compare to the norm. For example, in this month's chart, US Gold's current titles are worth 4.81 percentage points above average - according to the industry's reviewers.

We print only the top 25 companies each month. In fact, we keep tabs on all of them, but you don't want to read through a list of over 100 names in every issue. Occasionally, a new company will enter the listings, in which case its name is marked with an asterisk.

Finally, we take care that the information here is genuinely useful. To that end, we don't count companies which have only received a single solitary review.

Software index: 75.65
Still going up! Looks like this Christmas could be a really hot one!

PUBLISHER	SCORE	+/-	INDEX	Mirrorsoft	82	n/a	6.35
Rainbird	89.33	n/a	13.68	Infogrames	81.89	n/a	6.24
Digital Magic	86.75	n/a	11.1	Palace	81.54	14.37	5.89
Micro Style	85.15	0.17	9.5	Audiogenic	81.05	18.47	5.4
Activision	83.72	2.97	8.07	Atlantis	81	n/a	5.35
Microprose	83.69	-2.64	8.04	US Gold	80.46	4.08	4.81
Gremlin	83.67	-4.21	8.02	Millennium	80.3	4.8	4.65
Origin	83.47	n/a	7.82	PSS/Mirrorsoft	80	14.25	4.35
Storm (Sales Curve)	83.25	0.81	7.6	Electronic Zoo	79.6	n/a	3.95
Spectrum Holobyte	83	n/a	7.35	Image Works	79.08	11.97	3.43
ARC	82.67	n/a	7.02	Empire	78.86	-5.72	3.21
Innerprise	82.5	n/a	6.85	Domark	78.79	0.85	3.14
Ocean	82.24	7.23	6.59	Electronic Arts	78.61	-7.49	2.96

AMIGA

Powermonger	Electronic Arts	95.08
Lotus Esprit Turbo	Gremlin	89.46
Immortal	Electronic Arts	88
Indianapolis 500	Electronic Arts	87.75
Mean Streets	US Gold	87.75

Bullfrog's follow-up to *Populous* obviously hasn't disappointed anyone: straight in at number one with a huge score.

C64

Plotting	Ocean	90
Rick Dangerous II	Micro Style	89.25
Lords of Chaos	Blade	88.5
Ace/Ace 2	Encore	88.25
Navy Seals*	Ocean	88

*cartridge only

Ocean's Taito coin-op conversion just edges out *Rick Dangerous II* for the top slot, while two budget charters from last time survive into this month's chart.

AMSTRAD CPC

Twin World	Ubi Soft	83.17
TNT	Domark	83.17
Pro Golf	Code Masters	74.5
Guardian Angel	Code Masters	72
Ace/Ace 2	Encore	59.25

Ubi Soft obviously knows a thing or two about CPC games. Last month it had three titles in this chart, including the number one, this time, a fourth Ubi Soft game takes over the top slot.

IBM PC

Midwinter	Rainbird	92.5
Welltris	Infogrames	87.55
Covert Action	Microprose	87.07
Secret of Monkey Island	US Gold	87
Bad Blood	Origin	60

A case of four hits and one other here. *Midwinter* has been hanging around this chart for months, thanks to delays.

WHAT THE FIGURES ABOVE MEAN...

First, of course, you've got the game. Then the software house and – in the last column – the average score (converted to a percentage with typical ACE precision to two decimal places) the game received in ALL reviews during the last month. Don't forget that the review ratings are taken from all UK magazines, not just ACE, so we don't necessarily agree with some of the judgements here, but all review ratings are, to a certain extent, subjective.

SPECTRUM AND ST CHARTS
OPPOSITE

HOW TO ENTER

STEP ONE

Find a **postcard** – or write your entry on the **back of an envelope**. Enter your name and address, a daytime telephone number if you have one, and the Round Number.

STEP TWO

Tell us your age and which machine you own. Just in case you win!

STEP THREE

Examine this month's charts. Then, using your knowledge of the games scene, try to predict which games will come top of the six machine specific charts. Finally, enter on your postcard:

- the top game for the Spectrum
- the top game for the C64
- the top game for the CPC's
- the top game for the IBM PC
- the top game for the Amiga
- the top game for the ST

YOU DON'T HAVE TO ENTER A SUGGESTION FOR EVERY MACHINE! But remember that your chances of winning may increase if you do.

STEP FOUR (OPTIONAL)

You can also try to predict which company will be at the top of next month's Stockmarket listing (see this page). Enter on the card:

The top softco will be...(name of company)

STEP FIVE (OPTIONAL)

If you want to go for the jackpot £150 prize,

then select any of the previous categories and try to predict the top FIVE entries for next month instead of just the top one. Then tell us which category you're predicting for – it can be either the Stockmarket or any of the machine categories in Step Three. **REMEMBER – YOU CAN ONLY SUBMIT ONE JACKPOT CATEGORY!**

STEP SIX

Post the card (WITH a stamp!) to us to arrive not later than the closing date for this round (31st December). The address is:

ACE Stockmarket
30-32 Farringdon Lane
London
EC1R 3AU

The first correct forecast for each category taken out of the hat wins the prize. If you get more than one entry correct, you'll be entered in further draws for each category, thus increasing your chances of winning a prize.

THIS IS ROUND 14

Each month's competition has a round number so that we can correctly identify entries. You **MUST** include the round number on your postcard otherwise your entry may not be processed correctly.

THE RULES

- All entries must be received by December 31st 1990.
- No employees of EMAP, or of any company involved in the production, distribution, or sale of ACE Magazine are eligible for entry.
- Only one entry per household. Proof of posting not held as proof of delivery.
- We cannot undertake to deliver specific software titles as prizes, but rest assured that we will make every effort to ensure that the games get the adrenalin pumping!

ATARI ST

Spindizzy Worlds	Activision	90.67
Immortal	Electronic Arts	87.5
Turrican	Rainbow Arts	86.25
Mean Streets	US Gold	85.26
Shadow of the Beast	Psygnosis	84.83

All change this month. Both *Turrican* and *Shadow of the Beast* are a bit late on the ST compared to other formats; has the extra programming time been well spent?

SPECTRUM

Ivan Ironman Stewart	Virgin	91
Rick Dangerous II	Micro Style	90.5
Daley Thompson Challenge	Hit Squad	89
Saint Dragon	Storm	86
Prison Riot	Players Premier	81.5

Ivan Ironman Stewart has been two months in a row at number one, but late dashes for the line from *Rick D* and *Daley T* threaten to topple him next time.



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EVERYONE AT CONSOLE QUEST WISHES YOU ALL A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS

We, at Console Quest, would like to THANK all of our customers for the help you have given us over the last year. We hope that you will continue to support us in the future. Thank you very much from Anna, David, Ruth, Little John, Johnboy & Becky.

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 GRANADA X
 BURNING FORCE
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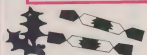
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HAPPY XMAS!

Mark Smiddy makes mental contact (VERY mental) with a gnome in Santa's grotto who reckons he has a good line on gift ideas for gamers. Whatever machine you've got, there's a gnomic suggestion for you here...

By special arrangement with ACE, Guider (the little lost gnome) reports direct from Santa's Grotto on what the best-dressed micros will be wearing this Christmas

STOCKING FILLERS

The essential peripheral this year for any games nut must be a subscription to ACE magazine. Yes this is the one. Imagine it no more trudging down to the shops in the pouring rain and driving snow just to discover the shop have sold out. A full 12 issues of the most informed games mag this side of the moon delivered straight to your door. Phone 0858 410510 for full details, or 0858 410888 for the credit card hotline. A UK sub costs just £17.95.

For those long winter nights spent blasting away at alien forces or just playing your favourite tunes, the **Compulink Stereo Headphone Adapter** should come in handy. This beautifully constructed little gadget has

SAVE A QUID!

Every penny counts, guv, and so US Gold have generously offered ACE readers £1 off ANY game you order from them between now and Christmas. All you have to do is send your cheque for the full amount less £1

(full catalogue details available on request from the address below) and mention the magic words ACE Special £1 Offer. The address is:

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two headphone sockets and a volume control. Suitable for Amiga and STe machines this should keep parents happy.

Or how about this for PC, ST and Amiga: "My mouse has no ball." "Oh, how does he roll." "On an optical surface that reflects the light from two LEDs. This is focused onto the surface of a light sensitive chip that decodes the movement. I got mine from Golden Image. What's yours called?"

Owners of most ST machines should find Meedmore's **Stickshift** a liberation from the drudgery of continually swapping mouse and joysticks leads. This little goody plugs into the mouse port and provides two independent ports for the joystick and mouse. To switch between the two all you have to do is use the one you want and presto, this little box of tricks does the rest.

Owners of Lynx, Gameboy, Atari, PC, Amigas etc. should find an interconnection

for supremacy.

BLOOMER FILLERS

For the comms nut who has everything, a nice new **HT9600** VT42, V42bis modem from Hi-Tec Modems should come in very handy. The feature packed little beauty has all the features the budding hacker should ever need and a lot more beside. Including full error correction, data compression, speed buffering up to 38,400 baud and an extended Hayes command set.

Probably the ultimate solution for any mouse or joystick problem is the **Gravis Mousestick**. The first computer controlled joystick in the world, the Mousestick can be programmed to emulate just about anything from a mouse, to a trackball to a switched joystick.

BLOOMER BUSTERS

You're going to have to tie a knot in granny's bloomers for this one. The Megaforce I is another one of those arcade cabinets we keep hearing about. The difference this one is empty. That's right, you get the cabinet and put your own machine and monitor inside. It will accept just about anything from a Spectrum to an FM Towns and will set you back just short of 200 quid.

Something to put in the above might as well be a **Neo Geo**. Although this machine is still in the process of being officially launched in the UK, it is still available through grey imports. Games are as good as the real thing, because they are the real thing - straight out of arcade machines. Cost around £400 for the main machine plus another £200 for cartridges.

And finally folks, the tour de force, a Kray XMP. Probably the fastest and most expensive piece of computer hardware in the world today. Just look at those graphics. Next time you watch a move, ask yourself this: is it real or is it Kray? We've got half a gross of these to deliver, the only problem is we can't get them into the sled. Oh, dear that sounds like Santa now - and who is that with him? Two men in white coats carrying fishing rods! Time I made an exit.

EDITOR'S NOTE

We cannot accept any responsibility for the opinions of a mentally deranged gnome or the sanity of other painted garden furniture or figurines.

WHAT THE WELL-DRESSED REINDEER IS WEARING THIS CHRISTMAS...

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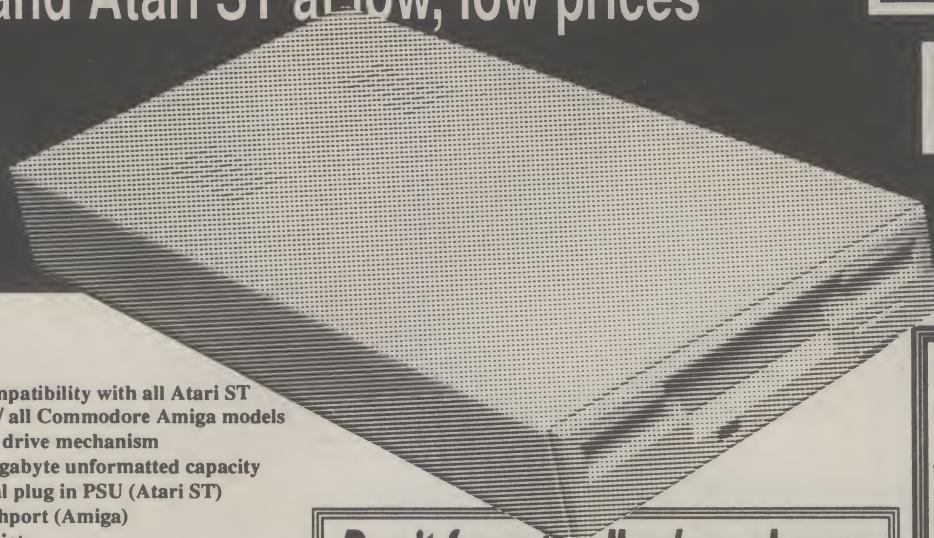
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lead to connect two machines very useful. The PC, ST and Amiga can all be connected using a fairly standard RS232 null modem cable. The other machines need a custom lead. Specifics aside, these enhance the thrill of playing many games (*Stunt Car Racer*, *Gauntlet*, *F-16 Combat Pilot* etc.) by allowing two players to fight each other in a head-to-head battle

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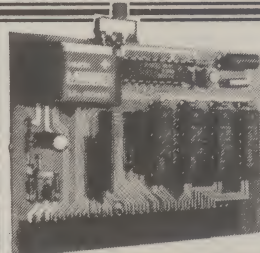
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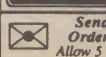
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HARD SELL

Have yourself a merry little console! These game-playing marvels look set to be THE big-sellers this Xmas. So which name should you be bunging up the chimney on a scrap of paper?

You don't want to get stuck with a redundant or unsupported machine, or one that doesn't fit your needs or your pocket. So, to help you make that all-important decision, here's a full run-down on all the major contenders. These packages and prices are the ones you'll find on the shop shelves this Xmas.

Generally, local dealers should be the first place to make further enquiries, although we've provided company contact numbers in case you're having real problems.

The Star Ratings are there as a rough qualitative guide; the more stars the better.

AMSTRAD GX4000

Package: GX4000 console, 2 controllers and *Burning Rubber* game.

Processor: 4MHz Z80A

Console Memory: 64K

Recommended Retail Price: £99

Contact: Amstrad 0782 566344

IN BRIEF

Amstrad have partly gone up the Commodore path, but have wisely taken the opportunity to upgrade the hardware. The palette is increased, with multitasking hardware scrolling and 16 hardware sprites increasing to 32 with interrupt tricks. Unfortunately the sound chip is the same old tinny one used in the CPCs, albeit in stereo - you can't have everything, I suppose. While some software houses express reservations of the machine being a success outside Europe (and hence reticent about committing support to it), many are working on titles for the machine.

GRAPHICS

Resolution: Same as Amstrad CPC.

Palette: 4096

Colours: 32

TV: Yes

Monitor Output: Yes.

Monitor Supplied: No.

Monitor Options: SCART, Amstrad socket.

Sprites: 16, 32 with hardware interrupts.

Speed: Pretty good for 8-bit technology.

SOUND

Speaker Quality: Depends on TV/monitor.

MIDI: No.

Stereo Output: Yes.

Performance: Unimpressive 3 channel chip as on old CPCs, but now runs independently of main processor.

HARDWARE

Joystick: 2 game controllers supplied.

Ports: Monitor/TV ports, stereo headphone socket, 3 joystick ports (2 digital, 1 analogue).

SOFTWARE

Price: Around £25.

Cartridge Memory: 128K

Existing Software Base: Small, but growing fast.

Current Releases: Thirty titles due by January 1991.

Prospects: Very good, with several software houses working on titles.

BUYLINES

Best Buy Price: As RRP.

Second Hand Availability: None as yet.

Maintenance: One year guarantee.

STAR RATINGS

Graphics: ★★★

Sound: ★★★

Expansion: ★★

Overall: ★★★★★

ATARI LYNX

Package: Lynx with *California Games*.

Processor: 16MHz 6502

Console Memory: 64K

Recommended Retail Price: £179.95

Contact: Atari PR 071 388 9871

IN BRIEF

The Lynx was designed by a team including RJ Mical, one of the men behind the Amiga. If that doesn't convince you consider it runs a fast 6502, has 8Mb of game storage on its cards and supports multi-player games. The graphics hardware has built in hardware scrolling and image scaling. Software is a little thin at the moment but bound to increase during 1991.

GRAPHICS

Resolution: 160 x 102

Palette: 4096

Colours: 16

TV: No

Monitor Output: No

Monitor Supplied: Yes - 3.5 inch backlit colour LCD

Monitor Options: None

Sprites: Special graphics hardware effectively treats ALL screen objects as sprites!

Speed: Fast

SOUND

Speaker Quality: Very good

MIDI: No

Stereo Output: Yes

Performance: 4 channel, 5 octave stereo sound has to be heard to be believed.

HARDWARE

Joystick: 4 way joystick.

Ports: Cartridge port; multi-player port; miniature stereo headphone jack.

SOFTWARE

Price: £30-35.

Cartridge Memory: 8Mb

Existing Software Base: Very small.

Current Releases: *California Games* is a great freebie.

Prospects: Uncertain but several new titles in the pipeline.

BUYLINES

Best Buy Price: As RRP

Second Hand Availability: Very few

Maintenance: One year's guarantee.

STAR RATINGS

Graphics: ★★★★★

Sound: ★★★★★

Expansion: ★

Overall: ★★

ATARI VCS

Package: Both VCS2600 and VCS7800 come with controller and free game.

Processor: 6507 (2600)/6502 (7800)

Console Memory: Not known.

Recommended Retail Price: VCS2600 £39.99; VCS7800 £69.99

Contact: Atari PR 071 388 9871

IN BRIEF

The VCS2600 is a reboxed version of the original Atari games console which, until a couple of years ago, remained the best selling home video games system of all time. The VCS7800 is a revamped version of the VCS2600 with a faster processor,

slightly better sound and vastly improved graphics.

GRAPHICS

Resolution: 192 x 160 (2600); 320 x 242 (7800)

Palette: 16 (2600)/256 (7800)

Colours: 4 (2600)/16 (7800)

TV: Yes

Monitor Output: No

Monitor Supplied: No

Monitor Options: No

Sprites: N/A/64

Speed: Slow

SOUND

Speaker Quality: Depends on TV

MIDI: No

Stereo Output: No

Performance: Limited to 1 channel on 2600 and two on 7800.

HARDWARE

Joystick: Supplied

Ports: 2 x 9 pin D for joysticks; TV; cartridge port.

SOFTWARE

Price: £7-13.

Cartridge Memory: Not known.

Existing Software Base: Small

Current Releases: Rare

Prospects: Unsure in the light of new competition from Japan.

BUYLINES

Best Buy Price: As RRP.

Second Hand Availability: Worth looking

Maintenance: One year's guarantee.

STAR RATINGS

	2600	7800
Graphics:	★	★★★
Sound:	★	★★★
Expansion:	None	None
Overall:	★	★★★

C64 GAMES SYSTEM

Package: C64GS console, controller and 4 games (*Klax*, *Fiendish Freddy*, *Flimbo's Quest* and *International Soccer*).

Processor: 1MHz 6502

Console Memory: 64K

Recommended Retail Price: £99.99

Contact: Commodore 0628 770088

IN BRIEF

Take a Commodore C64 computer, remove the keyboard and stick it in an unattractive slab of a box and what have you got? A "new" console! It's an unusual move, but with the clout of Commodore behind it, it just might work.

GRAPHICS

Resolution: 160 x 200 in multi-colour mode.

Palette: 16

Colours: 16

TV: Yes

Monitor Output: Yes

Monitor Supplied: No

Monitor Options: RGB

Sprites: 8

Speed: Slow CPU, helped out by custom graphics and sound chips.

SOUND

Speaker Quality: Depends on TV/monitor
MIDI: No
Stereo Output: No
Performance: 3 channel SAM - one of the best 8-bit sound chips.
HARDWARE
Joystick: Joypad supplied.
Ports: None
SOFTWARE
Price: Around £25.
Cartridge Memory: 4Mbits.
Existing Software Base: Potentially huge, but small at the moment. Commodore anticipate around 100 titles by Xmas.
Current Releases: Plenty forthcoming from various software houses.
Prospects: Uncertain. Do people really want a console version of an ageing, though admittedly good, computer? Software support is likely to be pretty good for a while at least.

BUYLINES

Best Buy Price: As RRP.
Second Hand Availability: None
Maintenance: One year guarantee.

STAR RATINGS

Graphics: ★★★
Sound: ★★★
Expansion: ★
Overall: ★★

NINTENDO NES

Package: Standard Pack includes console, plus 2 game controllers and *Super Mario Brothers* game. Mutant Machine pack as above but substitutes *Turtles* game for *Mario*. Action Pack as Standard, but includes Zapper gun and *Duck Hunt* game.
Processor: Not known.
Console Memory: 2K.
Recommended Retail Price: Standard Pack £79.95; Deluxe Pack £99.95.
Contact: Deighton PR 071.836 2973

IN BRIEF

The world's largest selling console, largely because of the playability of some of its games rather than its hardware specification, which is 8-bit average.

GRAPHICS

Resolution: 256 x 240
Palette: 52
Colours: 16
TV: Yes

Monitor Output: No
Monitor Supplied: No
Monitor Options: None
Sprites: N/A

Speed: Average

SOUND

Speaker Quality: N/A
Stereo Output: No
Performance: Average

HARDWARE

Joystick: 2 dedicated controllers supplied. IR wireless controllers with 30ft range available for £39.95.
Ports: None out of the ordinary.
SOFTWARE
Price: £20-40.

Cartridge Memory: Not known.
Existing Software Base: Over 50 titles available here. Many more available in Japan but these require a converter to run.
Current Releases: Nintendo predict about 2-3 titles per month.
Prospects: In the UK, improving due to increased support - but this is yesterday's technology.
Software Loading: Instant
BUYLINES
Best Buy Price: As RRP.
Second Hand Availability: A few.
Maintenance: One year's guarantee. Faulty machines return to dealer.

STAR RATINGS

Graphics: ★★★
Sound: ★★
Expansion: ★★★★★
Overall: ★★

NINTENDO GAMEBOY

Package: Main unit with *Tetris* game.
Processor: 1MHz customised 8-bit Z80A.
Console
Memory: 16K
Recommended Retail Price: £69.99.
Contact: Deighton PR 071 836 2973

**IN BRIEF**

Nintendo were the first company to produce a dedicated handheld console and now it seems everyone wants to get in on the act. On reflection even the Game Boy was a long time coming since the technology employed by the display is starting to look dated. Not to be dismissed simply because of mono graphics - this machine has some superb titles and the two-player link-up option has tremendous potential.

GRAPHICS

Resolution: 20 x 18 characters.
Colours: 4 grey shades.
Monitor Supplied: Yes - LCD display is lit by ambient light.
Sprites: 40 8 x 8 pixels.
Speed: Fast for what it is.

SOUND

Speaker Quality: Depends on headphones.
Stereo Output: Yes
Performance: Plays a lot better than it looks.

HARDWARE

Joystick: Built-in 8-way joypad.
Ports: Headphone socket; dual-machine interface.
SOFTWARE
Price: £20-25.
Cartridge Memory: 64K
Existing Software Base: The best for any handheld.
Current Releases: Increasing
Prospects: Excellent

BUYLINES

Best Buy Price: As RRP
Second Hand Availability: None.
Maintenance: One year's warranty

STAR RATINGS

Graphics: ★★★
Sound: ★★★★★
Expansion: Dual machine interface has lots of potential.
Overall: ★★★★★

NEC PC ENGINE

Package: Console unit, controller and free game
Processor: Customised 8-bit.
Console Memory: 64K internal, 8K video. (Turbographx: 128K internal, 32K video.)
Recommended Retail Price: N/A (US price around \$199)
Contact: Local dealers

IN BRIEF

Sadly, it now seems unlikely that this machine will ever be officially supported by NEC in the UK. Its CD-ROM add-on drive is now the largest selling CD unit on the market and is responsible for much of the recent increase in CD development. There's also a 16-bit version, vastly more powerful, called the Turbographx, but this is only rarely available through importers and at a price - usually around £300. NEC also have a handheld version of the Engine which is software compatible with its larger brother.

GRAPHICS

Resolution: 256 x 216
Palette: 512 (Turbographx: 1024)
Colours: 32 - 16 background and 16 shared by sprites.
TV: Yes

Monitor Output: N/A

Monitor Supplied: No

Monitor Options: N/A

Sprites: 64 (Turbographx: 128)

Speed: Very fast considering this is an 8-bit!

SOUND

Speaker Quality: Depends on monitor.

MIDI: No

Stereo Output: Yes

Performance: 6-channel stereo

HARDWARE

Disk Format: CD ROM at extra cost.

Disk Price: Read-only so N/A

Disk Performance: Superb - the CD ROM adds a new dimension.

Joystick: Supplied with dedicated controller.

SOFTWARE

Price: Around £25-40 imported.

Cartridge Memory: Not known.

Existing Software Base: Large

Current Releases: Increasing.

Prospects: Good.

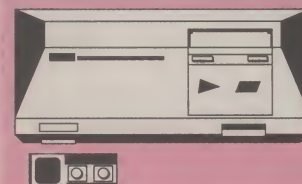
BUYLINES

Best Buy Price: Currently grey import.

Second Hand Availability: V Rare
Maintenance: Watch out - grey imported machines rarely have any real warranty.

STAR RATINGS

Graphics: ★★★★★
Sound: ★★★★★
Expansion: ★★★★★
Overall: ★★★★★
Package: Console using cartridge or

SEGA MASTER

smart card plus game controller and *Alex Kidd in Miracle World* game.
Recommended Retail Price: £79.99; £99.95 (+ light gun); £129.95 (+ light gun and 3D glasses).
Processor: Z80.
Console Memory: 32K.
Contact: Virgin Mastertronic 071 727 8070

IN BRIEF

Japanese software base is not as good as Nintendo's but more titles reach UK. Mastertronic have given good support to the machine so the prospects look good. Like the Nintendo, however, this 8-bit machine uses established but dated technology.

GRAPHICS

Resolution: 256 x 192

Palette: 64

Colours: 16

TV: Yes

Monitor: No

SOUND

Speaker Quality: Depends on TV.

Performance: 3 channels.

HARDWARE

Joystick: Game controller supplied.

SOFTWARE

Price: £10-40 (typically £25)

Cartridge Memory: Not known.

Existing Software Base: Very good.

Current Releases: Good

Prospects: As good as any 8-bit console.

BUYLINES

Best Buy Price: As RRP
Second Hand Availability: Some
Maintenance: One year's guarantee. Faulty machines return to dealer.

STAR RATINGS

Graphics: ★★★
Sound: ★★★
Expansion: ★★★★★
Overall: ★★★★★

Package: Console unit, controller,

SEGA MEGADRIVE

and *Altered Beast* game.
Processor: 68000 + Z80B support.
Console Memory: 74K main, 64K video.
Recommended Retail Price:

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IN BRIEF

Excellent example of the new 16-bit console technologies. The first decent 16-bit console to receive official support in the UK.

GRAPHICS

Resolution: 320 x 224

Palette: 512

Colours: 64

TV: Yes

Monitor: No

Sprites: 80

Speed: Very fast

SOUND

Speaker Quality: N/A

MIDI: No

Stereo Output: Yes

Performance: 12 channel stereo sound is produced by a custom FM chip and sounds fantastic.

HARDWARE

Joystick: Dedicated controller supplied.

SOFTWARE

Price: £30-50 (typically £35).

Cartridge Memory: Not known.

Existing Software Base: Good

Current Releases: Few in UK at present

Prospects: Very good.

BUYLINES

Best Buy Price: As RRP

Second Hand Availability: N/A

Maintenance: One year on UK machines.

STAR RATINGS

Graphics: ★★★★★

Sound: ★★★★★

Expansion: ★★

Overall: ★★★★★

Package: Console unit, controller unit and memory card (can store 27

SNK NEO-GEO

games scores).

Processor: 12MHz 68000 + 4MHz Z80A support.

Console Memory: 64K work RAM, 64K video RAM.

Recommended Retail Price: £399

Contact: Active Sales 081 752 0260

IN BRIEF

Technically the most advanced console currently available, the games are of arcade quality, with huge sprites and excellent sound, although the gameplay is a little lacking in the current crop of titles. The game cartridges can store up to 330 Mbits of data, but this is reflected in their price - £199.99! All is not lost, since Active Sales have launched a club where members can rent software for £25 a month. Definitely the system to have if you want to pose, and to be very poor!

GRAPHICS

Resolution: Arcade quality.

Palette: 65536

Colours: 4096

TV: Yes

Monitor Output: Yes

Monitor Supplied: No

Monitor Options: RGB, SCART

Sprites: 380

Speed: Remarkable

SOUND

Speaker Quality: Depends on TV/monitor

MIDI: No

Stereo Output: Yes

Performance: 13 channel stereo.

HARDWARE

Joystick: Supplied, second available for around £70.

Ports: Walkman socket

SOFTWARE

Price: £200.

Cartridge Memory: 330 Mbits.

Existing Software Base: Few at

present.

Current Releases: 12 planned by the end of the year.

Prospects: Uncertain, but the members' club could help swing chance in its favour.

BUYLINES

Best Buy Price: As RRP.

Second Hand Availability: None as yet.

Maintenance: One year's guarantee.

STAR RATINGS

Graphics: ★★★★★

Sound: ★★★★★

Expansion: ★

Overall: ★★★★★

AND SO THIS IS CHRISTMAS, AND WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?

You haven't called me, for a start. If you have any suggestions or queries regarding the Hardware section then write to me at the usual ACE Address or call during the Hotline hours.

David Upchurch



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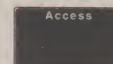
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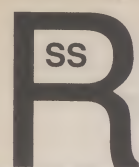
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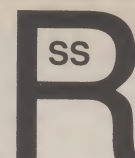
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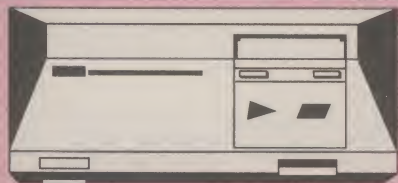
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SEGA MASTER



Two Master system games have been currently "on" in the office and they've really become favourites among the team.

Super Monaco Grand Prix and Alex Kidd in Shinobi Land have both kept us hitting those control panels way into the evening. Each has a very different style and each deserves a review, so, as if by magic...

SUPER MONACO GRAND PRIX

3D race games certainly seem to be the thing of the moment, and it's nice to see a Master system racer which is big enough to go up against the 16 bitters.

Fans of the coin-op should be well pleased with this conversion. Two players have the chance to race in the Monaco Grand Prix, competing against themselves as well as the computer-controlled drone cars. Should you find yourself with an especially good (or unsociable) friend, you can race against another computer-controlled vehicle.

The screen display is split into two halves, each depicting the car and view of each racer. The track rockets out of the screen at impressive speed, while a map at the top of the screen indicates their position on the track.

A constant reminder of your current position is found slap bang in the middle of the screen.

Super Monaco GP really is a rather excellent game, containing virtually all of the elements found in the coin-op original. A sound buy.

ALEX KIDD IN SHINOBI WORLD

The Japanese seem incapable of designing any truly gung-ho fighting games. They just can't resist those fruity bonuses.

Alex Kidd is no exception. Here, in a parody of the deluge of ninja games, Alex Kidd must battle the numerous, but not especially fierce warriors.

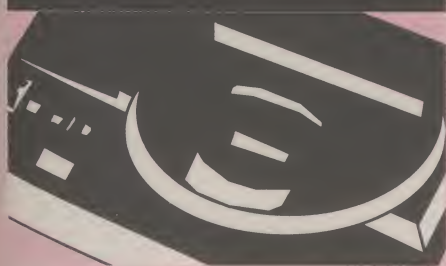
Guide Alex through the thoroughly colourful and well animated battle-zones, cracking heads and collecting pink-heart strength enhancers. Along the way to his goal, Alex must defeat increasingly tough baddies, armed with no more than his sword and his wits.

Despite the throwaway appearance and lightweight nature of the game, there's actually a lot of playability in here. Attaining proficient control of Alex is a genuine challenge and progress through the levels offers just as much reward as the heavyweight games.

Next month, tips tips tips in our Master System games extravaganza!

● Richard Evans

MEGADRIVE



It's probably old news to you by now, but I thought I'd mention it anyway. Sega are apparently developing a IBM PC compatible home computer, but with built-in Megadrive capabilities. So not only will you be able to do a bit of word processing, but you'll also be able to boot up *Strider* for a quick hack when you feel like it.

It looks just like a traditional PC, with a monitor, CPU slab and detachable keyboard, all in a rather drab matt-grey finish. However, mounted on the front of the CPU slab and looking very out of place on a PC, are two joystick ports and a cartridge slot. Obviously no slacker as a games machine, it's also pretty hot as a PC, sporting, as it does, a 16MHz 80286 CPU.

Sounds good, doesn't it? But, will we see it? I phoned Virgin Mastertronic, Sega's UK distributor, to see if there were any plans to bring it over here. Unfortunately, a spokeswoman informed me that although there were no current plans, Virgin are interested in distributing as much Sega product as possible on our shores, so who

knows? More news when we get it...

The demand for the Megadrive as Xmas approaches is getting pretty heavy! According to Virgin Mastertronic new shipments of the World's best console are being shipped in from Japan even as I write. If you want to get one for Christmas I'd advise you get down those shops NOW and place your order!

New official titles being released: *Ghostbusters II* comes out on November 28th and *World Cup Italia '90* comes out on December 6th (just in time to make it into your stocking!).

TARGET EARTH

Tip time! First a nifty little cheat from Jody Goodall of Madchester (Rave On!). Fancy nine Continues? OK, here's what you do. Start a game and destroy your warship, then let 'Rex' die on his way to the shuttle (callous so-and-so). Choose the 'Option' mode and change the pad Reset from Cancel to Enable.

Now, whilst still in 'Option' mode, press Button C and Start simultaneously. A pretty super girlie will slide on screen with nine Continues to offer you. Exit 'Option' mode and play on! In addition, to change the firing set-up press Buttons A, B and C simultaneously, and to become invincible press Start on the second controller.

HERZOG ZWEI

Crazy name for a crazy game! Again, Jody Goodall comes to the rescue to help you reach various game stages with these passwords:

- 5 wins: GGGKHAGOKLO
- 12 wins: BPHOHACAGML

DIRECT LINE

To YOUR micro...

Monthly machine specific columns for the users of the ten most popular machines, written from a personal viewpoint by other users...

- 19 wins: NPLOFOCAGKP
- 22 wins: IMLPFEGEMLC
- 25 wins: JAJJBPDNMC
- 28 wins: LILOPBDPIKJ
- 31 wins: JIJOMGJAKOL

Thanks, Jody! Keep writing - please!

Incidentally, I just want to back up what the review in 'Screentest' says about *Strider*. I was a big fan of the arcade game, although I could never get beyond Level 4, and I was totally gobs-macked by the Mega conversion. Talk about arcade perfect!

Talking of perfect conversions, what about the letter in this issue about the quality of Megadrive conversions? It's true that because the machine has a 68000 processor it is gaining rapid popularity with ST and Amiga programmers who want to break into console programming, but so far the number of 'port overs' from those machines has been minimal.

That's so far, however. What about the future? Are we doomed to paying £35 for games that computer owners will only be shelling out £25 for? The good news is almost certainly not. That's because the bulk of Sega software is going to be produced outside the UK, and the Amiga and ST are (unlike OUR machine) only really popular in Europe. Japanese and US software will continue to be generated specifically for the machine.

Anyway, enough of this cheery banter. Hope you have a very Mega Christmas, and see you in the New Year. By the way, did you know that according to the Chinese, 1991 is the Year of the Sega? I kid you... not?

● David Upchurch

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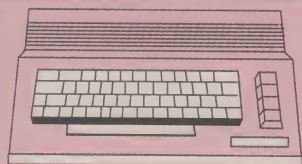
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C64



Two things strike me this month. First, the fact that a grand total of none of the Christmas blockbusters which we so eagerly awaited for review this issue have turned up. And yet, their release dates are incredibly close. As a result, those big-name games will be beckoning you from the shelves for a good three weeks before you can check any reviews. Worrying isn't it?

The second topic this month, and a far more cheery one at that, regards cartridges. The Christmas boom obviously offers softcos the best opportunity to stake their claim in the consoles market.

Ocean, possibly the furthest advanced in cartridge development have roughly divided their product range in half, 50% will be available on console, the remainder will be on tape or disk only.

The rationale behind the move is to make the products which are definite high-profile games cartridge based; it's easier to justify the £19.99 cartridge price for, say, Robocop 2 than the Nightbreed arcade game which is unlikely to receive a particularly warm reception.

It's interesting to note that Total Recall, the game many had chalked up as Ocean's Xmas smash is not going to be available on cartridge.

Domark are also keen to wave the cartridge flag, offering three titles previously unavailable on the 64. While the names are extremely familiar, Commodore versions of Badlands, Cyberball and Vindicators never actually made it onto the 64. All programs offer enhancements to the original games.

In general, it appears that games available on cartridge won't be available on the tape or disk formats. The exceptions to the rule (games available across all three) will need to incorporate lots of extra levels on the cartridge version to make sense.

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DOMARK - £19.99

BADLANDS - December
CYBERBALL - December
VINDICATORS - December

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At time of going to press, USG had no firm list of products, but confirmed they will be producing most of their forthcoming titles on cartridge. Interestingly, USG will be producing the titles across all three formats, hoping that the enhancements offered in the cartridge version will be enough to persuade us to part with the extra £8.

NEW PLEDGE FROM DI

Sim-maker Digital Integration, who have been producing all those flight simulators for about eight years now have vowed (among with a number of software houses) that they'll be producing lots more 64 stuff in the future, Rod Cobain, Operations Manager says; "It seems a real shame that so many companies are neglecting the 64; it's a massive market, and I think that it's silly to ignore it."

DI's most exciting 64 product at the moment is Extreme, a mixture of wire-frame animation and sprites. And you can look forward to a review next month.

COMPETITION

US Gold, in their wisdom, have offered us **TEN** copies of *ESWAT* and **FIFTY** glamorous *ESWAT* hip-pouches, made from expensive leatherette.

Ten first prize winners get the pouches, and a copy of the game which won't quite fit into them. The remaining forty will get pouches and no game (which will fit into them).

In order to scoop one of these highly desirable ensembles, simply answer the question below and send your answer on a postcard to PINK POUCH COMPO, ACE, Priory Ct, 30-32, Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.

THE QUESTION

ESWAT is an acronym for:

- a) Extra Special Weapons and Tactics
- b) Enhanced Special Weapons and Tactics
- c) Extra Strike With Terror

The competition closes on the 8th January. Employees of EMAP and US Gold are not eligible for entry. The Editor's decision is final and no correspondence can be entered into.

AND FINALLY...

Still the best game of recent months available for the 64 is... *Rick Dangerous 2* from Microprose, still keeping us crowded round the 64 after two months!.

●Jim Douglas

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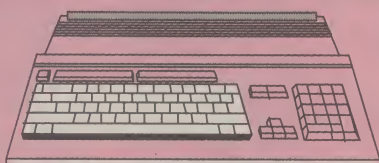
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AMIGA



Rhe Amiga may well be carving an important niche for itself in the future of games because of its popularity amongst Virtual Reality systems engineers.

It was pretty obvious from the Entertainment conference in New York (see pages 29-31 in this issue) that the Amiga is number one fave machine in this market. The main reason for this is the power and graphics facilities of the Amiga 3000 – several people are specifying it as a component in their developing VR set-ups, often using two or three 3000's linked together.

All this is very good news for Amiga owners, because ACE's tip for the next hot peripheral is pretty clear – a stereo goggle adaptor to enable true 3D presentation using one of the popular micros. The technology is perfectly simple and such a device could be brought to the market tomorrow at under £300. Because of all the work being done in VR with the Amiga, no prizes for guessing which machine should be first to

get the stereoscopic treatment.

★

Been playing *Klax* or *Venus*? Here are a couple of tips, thanks to Sigi Goode of Deakin, Australia..

"*Klax*: Hold down the spacebar and the 4 key on the keyboard in order to skip straight to the last level. This actually makes the game pretty boring for me, but...

"*Venus*: Here are the passwords for this neat insect smashing shoot-em-up (yecch, get that slug off me!...

Ice Wastes: Mantids
Death Valley: Satyrid
Dead City: Cicadas
Wood World: Psyllids
Creeping Swamp: Lycaenid
Kaverns: Pierids

★

Bad news on the CDTV front, unfortunately. First, as you probably already know, the true launch (i.e. readily available in the shops) of this system is now unlikely to be before late Spring 1991 and quite possibly later.

Second, Commodore's promised upgrade for Amiga owners is still a long, long way off. Finally, software support has cooled down considerably in the last few months as software houses, having leaped into development when the machine was first announced, have started dragging their

feet now that the machine has been delayed.

Even more ominous was the recent CDTV 'presentation' at the Entertainment conference in New York. Commodore hosted a special lunch for the games industry at the exclusive Marriott Marquis Hotel on Broadway with the express purpose of demonstrating CDTV. In a small room alongside, a small array of what looked like production models sat on tables doing, apparently, very little.

Ex-Atari honcho Nolan Bushnell, now in charge of CDTV development, leapt onto the stage after the second lavish course and announced that he would be telling us about CDTV accompanied by a slide demonstration developed on the machine and running on it.

Well, first it didn't run. Despite having software supremo Gail Wellington at the machine, it kept crashing. Again, and again, and again. Even more suspicious, the ACE correspondent actually saw this CDTV slideshow being created before the presentation – on an Amiga 3000! How sneaky can you get??

In view of all this, the future of CDTV looks, shall we say, temporarily cloudy....

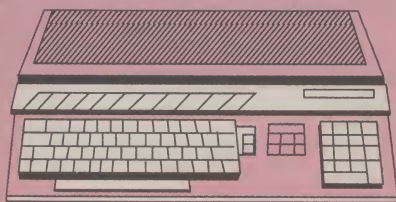
★

Finally, you might like to know that in America, British Amiga software is now regarded as the world's best, according to research carried out amongst users by a US Amiga software distributor. Keep it up, chaps!

See you next month, when we'll have a whole column choc-a-bloc with tips and hints. Yay!

Sam Vickers

ATARI ST



PC software is far too expensive. That's right, it's far too expensive – but this is partly your own fault. You see, the price of software has always been related to the initial cost of the machine it services... that's why C64 software always cost more than the Spectrum equivalent, and it's also why your games cost a good deal more (up to 15 quid more in some cases) than those that your mate buys for his ST or Amiga.

Okay, that bit's not your fault, but what is your fault is that publishers are reluctant to release 'budget' software for the PC like they do for every other machine because so far you've kept what's on offer at a low price at a distance somewhat greater than the length of your arm.

The situation is so ridiculous that Virgin Mastertronic's 16-Blitz budget label actually decided to raise the price of its software in order to make it more attractive. According to the label's product manager Andrew Wright:

"PC owners turn up their noses at a game which only costs a fiver, so we've introduced a new range, 16-Blitz Plus, which will feature re-releases of hits at £7.99."

Do you want to read that again? You wouldn't buy it for a fiver so they're now going to charge eight pounds – and it's a good bet that sales will probably increase dramatically.

The most amazing thing is that under these circumstances any of the publishers are bothering to release games at budget prices – but they are, so here's a quick run through of what's come on stream in the last month or so.

One of the larger companies which has only just entered the budget market is Electronic Arts, with its Star Performers range. These are all games which have had a full-price release and are now selling at £9.99. Of the six PC titles available, only three are real stunners – *Bard's Tale II*, *Chuck Yeager's AFT* and *Skate Or Die* – but that's not a bad strike rate, and picking up those three for the price of one new piece of full-price chart fodder can only be a good thing.

The aforementioned 16 Blitz range also has a new range poised to attack your small change, kicking off with *Xenon* and *Double Dragon*: the former (not to be confused with its older brother, *Xenon II*) was the now infamous Bitmap Brothers' first effort and still provides a good deal of challenging shoot 'em up action – on the subject of *Double Dragon* however, I think the less that's said the better.

Walsall-based *Elite* is another of the 'majors' which has decided to unleash some of its back

catalogue, kicking off with two TV licences, *A Question Of Sport* and *Mike Read's Pop Quiz*. Actually these are basically the same game, albeit with different questions – and they're actually a little bit on the expensive side at a tanner apiece – but if you want a little family fun, pick the one whose subject matter most suits your preference and kill some time showing off your amazing wealth of trivial knowledge.

The trouble with budget software though is that it's something of a double-edged sword. If games drop in value too quickly, then it's bound to damage their sales when they originally appear as people won't mind waiting a little while to get them at one third of the price. If however, the low price release is delayed for too long then the games will look so out of date that we'll remain in exactly the same situation as we're in at the moment with games buyers looking down with contempt on anything that costs less than 20 pounds.

Personally, I'm looking forward to the day when *Populous*, *Midwinter* and the likes become affordable to every PC gamesplayer – and the rise of a strong market for budget software can only help to bring this day a little closer. So, to do your bit, next time you see a gift horse, try to hold back for just a little while before examining its teeth – who knows, you may even end up with a few classics to add to your collection.

● **Ciaran Brennan**

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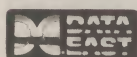
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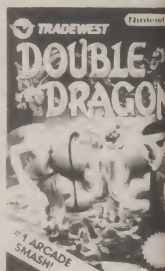


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EATON NORWICH
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PC ENGINE

You know how it is. On every machine there are games that are simply streets ahead of the rest. Jim Douglas, one-time editor of Sinclair User and now Assistant Editor of ACE nominates Zub on the Spectrum as one such title. Steve Cooke still swears by Spannerman on the Computers Lynx (easy, really – there were hardly any other games for it, poor fellow). Rik Haynes swears by Armalite on the C64. For the Amiga, CU Amiga games expert Mark Patterson nominates Midwinter...but what about the PC Engine, eh? Which are the games you've just GOT to have??

Since Christmas is coming, here's my own personal list of the titles that – if you haven't already got them – you should be putting at the top of your list. I've divided them into categories and, of course, these are all personal favourites. Yours may be different, in which case why not write in to me c/o ACE and let me know your nominations?

Here goes..

SPORTS SIMULATIONS

Formation Soccer

This is the only football game to appear on the Engine. The game contains loads of features such as volleys, overhead kicks, and headers, as well as all the usual corners and penalty shoot outs. It also contains an option to let up to four players play at the same time. All this displayed on vertically scrolling 3D.

World Court Tennis

This, like footy, is the only game of its type on the grey market. It sports an amazing control method and brilliant graphics. Also like football, it has a multiplayer option which is great fun. Arguably the best tennis simulation on any console or computer.

SHOOT EM UPS

R-Type 1+2

R-Type 1 contains the first four levels of the arcade while R-Type 2 contains the latter stages. In R-Type (just in case you've been asleep for the last year or two) you fly your R9 fighter against the evil Bydo empire. The two cards feature arcade perfect graphics without a flicker in sight, even when the action is at its hottest.

Ordyn

This game had a massive cult following when it hit the arcades in 1988. The game itself has been accurately translated onto the Engine and features all the normal cute end of level baddies and all the screen clearing

power-ups. All this is nothing new, but *Ordyn* is done in such a neat way that it is a must. The graphics are brilliant, the game plays even better. Buy it!

ARCADE

Devil Crash

This is the follow up to *Alien Crush* and I can truthfully say that this is better than the original. Its a superb pinball simulation featuring great gameplay, marvellous table graphics, hard goth rock soundtracks and loads of surprises and bonus screens. A must for all Engine owners, even if you never considered going near a pinball table before.

Splatterhouse

A few years ago this game was doing its time in the arcades. Its was a huge hit. The secret of its success was the horrific and gory graphics. The game has now been ported over to the Engine and it has lost none of its appeal over the last few years. The graphics appear to be spruced up a bit from the arcade original, and the gameplay has lost none of its. This unfortunately is the downfall of the game as you are given about 6 continues, and unless you resist the urge to keep on continuing you will soon find yourself finishing the game. If you can resist the urge you will have bought a classic game.

Dungeon Explorer

Five players can simultaneously take part in this brilliant Gauntlet style game. You try to battle through 13 (unlucky) levels each crawling with every type of horrible creature available. The graphics and SFX bring out the atmosphere. Explorer just oozes playability, and if you get 5 people playing at one time you have a whole new perspective to the game.

These are only my opinions on which are the best Engine games around at the minute. There are naturally lots more classic games about and if anyone has a view or load of tips about them let me know:

AND ONE FOR THE STOCKING

One the best peripherals available for the PC Engine is the 5 player adapter, and the extra joypads. This enables up to 5 players to be able to play one game at the same time. This increases the number of friends you have, and makes the game more fun, therefore increasing the lastibility.

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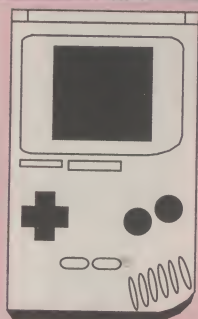
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GAMEBOY

Gameboy tips are go! This month, Spiderman seems to be posing a lot of problems for you Gameboy fiends.

Most people seem to have put Batman to one side in favour of this equally tricky little cartridge. Certainly judging by the amount of pleas for help we receive each month, you folks need some help with it.



MYSTERIO AND THE END-OF-LEVEL-GANG

Your first area of real difficulty will probably be on the sixth screen in. Here, you must watch the patterns of Mysterio's bombs. They'll give away his location, allowing you enough time to position yourself in a prime strike point.

Actually doing battle with Mysterio is far from easy. He doesn't sit still for long. Take note of his movement pattern, and attack when he's dropping down. Always remember to avoid that awful gas.

The end of level bosses can withstand spinning web attacks with relatively little difficulty. Instead, opt for a straight fist fight. There's no

point wasting your webs when good old fashioned punching will do the job just as well.

General Tips:

When fighting Mysterio, dodge the explosions by moving to the right of the screen. Then duck. Wait for him to appear, hit him three times, and he should konk out.

THE HOBGOBLIN

Track down the Hobgoblin at the top of a skyscraper. Climb to the top of the building carefully avoiding those sneaky open windows. There's only one window that you can climb through, so keep looking.

Once atop the roof, you must battle the Hobgoblin's henchmen. They're really in their element here, and the action becomes a lot tougher. This is where to use your webs. Take out the henchmen and Swing your way across the rooftops towards the Hobgoblin's domain.

When Mr H appears, you know you're in for a fight. Dodge the jack-o-lanterns or your strength will be depleted, and you'll be in no fit state to fight.

The best policy to defeat the Goblin is to watch his movement pattern and kick him in the back as he turns away from you.

GENERAL TIPS:

The hobgoblin's battle is highly complicated. Head for the upper ledge and keep on the right hand side. Crouch down and start kicking until the bad guy drops under the ledge. Once he emerges from the bottom right, you can intercept him with a number of well-placed kicks.

THE SCORPION

Deep underground you'll encounter the Scorpion. His henchmen appear out of nowhere, so you've got to keep your wits about you at all times.

To move around in the subways, you can ride the tube trains, but you should be aware that the chances of an ambush are extremely high.

The Scorpion himself, is equipped with a large and deadly tail (hence the name). Once his tail has flicked out, run towards the Scorpion and plant a punch on him, then run back again. This way you can deplete his strength without incurring any hit points on yourself.

Another method of attack which proves successful for more sprightly players is to leap over and around the Scorpion, and then give him a kick in the knee from behind.

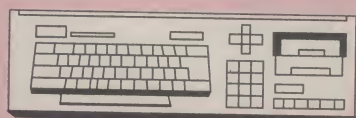
That should be more than enough to keep you going for the moment. Any further problems and you'll just have to rely on your Spidey-sense to help you out.

GENERAL TIPS:

A successful battle with the Scorpion is impossible unless you can perfect both your punching and kicking action. Continual punching will inflict hit points, since he's none too bright and will wander directly into the blows, but you must back off and keep him at bay with a suppressing fire of webs, lest his tail catches you in the crotch.

● Jim Douglas

AMSTRAD CPC



Who said that the 8-bit computers are dead? I've just seen a couple of games that reaffirm my faith in the ol' CPC...

A SHADOW OF ITS FORMER SELF?

Well, who would have thought it! Amstrad owners may have heard about Gremlin Graphics' conversion of the Psygnosis game, *The Shadow of the Beast*, and thought "Lovely idea, but it'll never work." - I know I did. The Amiga version boasted gorgeous smooth-scrolling graphics and atmospheric sound, while the Amstrad version boasts... can it be true?... gorgeous smooth-scrolling graphics and atmospheric sound too!

Admittedly, there have been some compromises, such as the screen being a little small and the use of only four colours for the graphics, but to compensate the slightly shallow gameplay of the original has been improved, although you are still annoyingly plonked right back at the beginning if you die. It's not really my place to go about giving ACE ratings, but if I reviewed it I'd score it somewhere in the upper 800s. Congratulations to all at Gremlin!

KICKIN' ASS

Remember *Kick Off* on the Amstrad? Pretty dismal, wasn't it? Thank goodness Anco have totally revamped the sequel, *Kick Off 2*. The graphics no longer look like direct Speccy ports and the playability is so good it hurts! The computer is a tough opponent, but the game is at its best in two-player mode. I bet you'll still be loading this up in a year or two's time so that you and your mate can have a game.

IN THE NAVY...

Currently hitting cinema screens Stateside and due here in the near future is a Rambo-esque big-budget movie called *Navy Seals*, starring Charlie Sheen, star of *Wall Street* and *Platoon*, and Michael Biehn, star of *Aliens* and *The Abyss* (where he played another Navy Seal. Incidentally, I thought *The Abyss* was a great film, ending aside, and the effects for the alien water tentacle were stunning - see it on video if you don't know what I'm on about!). Eminently suitable for a computer game, you may think, and sure enough here it is, thanks to those masters of the film tie-in, Ocean.

I managed to have a quick sneak preview of the game on the GX4000 console, and technically it's looked very nice; smooth scrolling in all directions and large colourful sprites with excellent animation. However, it seemed pretty tough - one shot is all it takes to lose a life and there's a heck of a lot of flak flying about. Hopefully you'll see the full ACE review soon - look out for it!

HOLY BATMAN TIPS

Seeing that this smashing game has just been re-

released in Ocean's *Hollywood Collection*, it seems like the right time to let you in on a great little cheat to let you skip levels. It's simple (and especially easy to remember if you're a Robocop fan) - just hold down keys 'E', 'D', '2', 'O', '9' all together at any time during the game. And for any Speccy owners who happen to be reading, you may be interested to know that this cheat will also work on your machines. Thanks to Steven Prescott of Wigan for that one.

TURRICAN TOO TOUGH?

Too blummin' right, it is! Great game, though. Wouldn't it be nice to have an extra life or, even better, infinite credits? What's that, Richard Owens of Edinburgh, just move to the far left at the start of the game and jump, and I can have both? Well, thank you!

Christmas is here again. It's been a great year for Amstrad fans, what with the release of two new computers and the console, and 1991 looks like being an even better, especially now that cartridge support is beginning to take off.

Amstrad recently announced that their profits are down for the second time in two years, with turnover dropping from £626 million to £577 million and pre-tax profit dropping from £76 million to £44 million. But take heart, because I think the new products should help them well on the way to recovery.

Enough doom and gloom - now is the time for good cheer. Don't drink and eat too much this Chrissy and I'll see you hale and hearty in the New Year. Bye!

● David Upchurch

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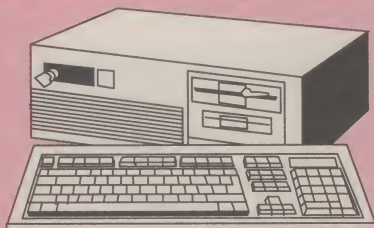
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Who'd have thought it? Who'd have guessed that in this post-Thatcher, money-conscious, I'm alright Jack, every man for himself era that there would still be a group of philanthropic programmers out there who want nothing more than to give you their software for absolutely nothing!

Well, actually it isn't quite like that, but the ever-growing range of Shareware and Public Domain software costs far less than games that come in fancy boxes filled with trinkets and tea towels - and if you look hard enough you may even find some that put their more expensive counterparts to shame.

Briefly, the Public Domain is made up of programs which have been made available by their developers for any number of reasons: it can come from back room enthusiasts who couldn't get their wares published any other way, or even from major publishers who put out demos of their latest games as another marketing tool. Shareware, on the other hand, is a sort of 'try

before you buy' scheme where individual programmers or small development teams circulate cut-down versions of their creations (which can be anything from simple bat and ball games to expanded memory managers) and allow the user to get to grips with them at their leisure. If you like the program you then register and receive the full thing - if not, you simply don't bother.

Either way, the initial outlay is usually little more than the price of the disk it comes on (or, if you log on to a bulletin board you can even save those few shillings by simply downloading the many programs available through that channel).

So much for the theory, but how do you find your way into this vast and unexplored silicon treasure chest? The best way is to scour the small ads in the back pages of this very magazine.

Even if an ad only offers one particular program, it's a fair bet that the person offering it has access to a whole host of others. A quick call will usually result in a catalogue winging its way towards you and the rest is simple.

Following this very method, I called up the Public Domain Software Library (fiendishly cryptic name I know, but somehow I thought that this could just be the type of place I was looking for). Within a matter of days I was the proud possessor of a range of games from Wizard Games, a Scottish programming team.

For roughly nine pounds I'd got my hands on seven programs, with content ranging from a 'psychedelic' maze game (pretty poor actually) to a superb soccer game called... wait for it, The Soccer Game.

Although it's entirely text-based The Soccer

Game is compulsive and realistic enough to keep any true fan stuck to their keyboard in a vain effort to gain promotion.

Like the rest of the Wizard programs, The Soccer Game is Shareware: this version only allows the budding manager two seasons to get it right, but if you want to play longer than that (which is more or less compulsory for anyone who catches the bug) and to take advantage of the 'save and load' facilities, then you'll have to pay the £12 registration fee.

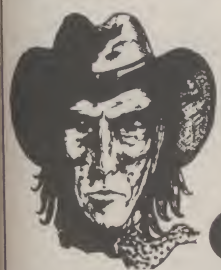
Although the Wizard disks only actually yielded two or three games that you'd bother to play twice, it still worked out as reasonable value for money - mostly because of The Soccer Game, it must be said. But if you came up with something as good as that every time you dipped into the Public Domain then it would become a more than worthwhile hobby.

For Local clubs who will have PD Libraries to hand contact The British Association of Computer Clubs, 31 Queens Crescent, Clapham, Beds. MK41 6DB.

Alternatively, if you're one of those sprocket-heads who's equipped with a modem (and knows how to use it) then you could contact one of the following bulletin boards.

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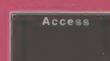
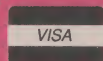
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CARVUP COMPO

Core Design, in order to announce, nay celebrate the release of their cartoon-style driving romp has kindly donated a number of pieces of software and appropriate merchandise materials to simply give away to you.

Carv Up, in case you didn't know, is a comic-book styled platform game featuring a cutely animated car as the central character. Not the motorway-orientated destruction that you may expect, Car-Vup is actually vaguely related to both PacMan and Amidar. Arnie (the car) must trundle along all the platforms of the level avoiding night-marish enemies. Once Arnie has travelled across each platform (changing their colour on the way), he will be whisked off to another level by a friendly helicopter. Among the levels you will find a Wild West scenario, Toyland (complete with Stickle Bricks and Lego) and even a Prehistoric Age. Lots of variety.

So, if Car-Vup sounds like your cup of tea, why not enter this contest? And all you have to do is answer the questions below and send them to the address printed at the end of the compo.

THE PRIZES:

There are **TEN** copies of the game, which will go to the TEN first prize winners. And there are **THIRTY** posters featuring Arnie, the game's automotive hero, which will be received by the ten first prize winners, and the **TWENTY** runners up.

THE QUESTIONS

1) Core's recent space exploration hit was called:

- a) Corporation
- b) Co-operation
- c) Coronation

2) Core is the coding team behind one of the most well known software heroes of late. The character is called...

- a) James Pond
- b) Rick Dangerous
- c) Bernie Rubber

3) Which colour is Arnie in Car-Vup

- a) Red
- b) Blue
- c) Beige

Send your entries to: ACE Carv-up Competition, Core Design, Suite C, Tradewinds House, 69-71a Ashbourne Road, DE3 3FS.

RULES:

Competition closes 8th January 1991. No employees of EMAP Images or Core Design or their relatives are eligible for entry. The Editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into.

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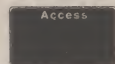


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HOT OFF THE SHELF

"Oh thanks, Gran! Just the game I've always wanted!" (Thinks: Oh no, what's this? Why didn't I show her *Hot Off The Shelf*, then I might have got something really good).

To celebrate Xmas the listing has been fully revamped, and now includes all the highest-rated titles featured in ACE over the past three months, as well as older but essential buys. All you see here should be available from your local dealer now.

BUCK ROGERS: COUNT-DOWN TO DOOMSDAY

SSI/US Gold ● Amiga £TBA ● PC £TBA ● C64 £TBA
The year is 2456, and Buck Rogers, tactical genius and fearless defender of freedom, is defrosted from cryogenic suspension to help

lead rebels on a ravaged Earth to victory and freedom from a tyrannical government. An RPG with similarities to the SSI AD&D games, the action is viewed in familiar pseudo-3D. All interaction is menu driven, with selections made by clicking the mouse. The number of locations are many and varied, and most are introduced by an attractive picture. Fans of this genre should be more than happy with this, and the space setting makes a welcome change from the usual medieval fantasy.

★ ACE RATING 885 ON AMIGA

CAPTIVE

Mindscape ● Amiga £24.99 ● Atari ST/E £24.99 ● PC £29.99

Another in the ever expanding number of RPGs portrayed using first-person perspective. *Captive*, written by veteran programmer Tony Crowther, pits you against hordes of rampaging aliens, with nothing to defend you but a briefcase. This briefcase, however, contains a computer giving you remote control over a four-droid team with which you must free yourself from the fortress where you are imprisoned. Excellent bitmapped graphics, atmospheric real-time stereo sound and a total of 65000 levels to explore place *Captive* very much in the ACE-rated category.

★ ACE RATING 930 ON AMIGA

CHAOS STRIKES BACK

FTL/Mirrorsoft ● Atari ST £24.99

● Amiga £TBA

The long awaited sequel to *Dungeon Master*. If you have

already played through the first program you can use your existing characters, otherwise there is another hall of mirrors you can select from. *Chaos* has a similar feel to *Dungeon Master*, but is much tougher. There are also some new features thrown in, like a character editor and help oracle (very handy). If you haven't played *Dungeon Master* then play that first before making a definite date with this game.

★ ACE RATING 945 ON ATARI ST

COVERT ACTION

Microprose ● PC £39.99

Yet another secret agent game! You play Max Remington, ex-CIA man, who is now earning a crust as a undercover investigator. However, Max is known to waive the fee for the President of the United States. On offer are four skill levels, three mission areas, three crime types and over a dozen enemy operatives to contend with. As you would expect from Microprose there's a wealth of detail and the tasks on offer are going to require many months of work to crack. Go to it, Max.

★ ACE RATING 902 ON IBM PC

CORPORATION

Core Design ● Atari ST £24.99 ● Amiga £24.99 ● PC £29.99

This role-playing cybernetic extravaganza from CORE pushes the limits of previous RPG's just that bit further. *Corporation* is a 3-D exploration, puzzle-orientated arcade

combat game (?) in the mould made traditional by the original *Dungeon Master* RPG. Your objective is to find and remove an embryo belonging to the ultimate biogenetic killing machine, bred by the UCC Corp. Light-source shaded raphics and sound of film-like quality, along with excellent playability and an intuitive control method all contributed in pushing *Corporation* over the 900 mark.

★ ACE RATING 945 ON AMIGA

DAMOCLES

Novagen ● Atari ST £24.95 ●

Amiga £24.95 ● PC £TBA

This unusual combination of flight sim and adventure game, and sequel to the well-received *Mercenary*, has been in development for a couple of years now, but the resulting game has been worth the wait. The wireframe graphics of the original game have been replaced by solid 3D vector graphics, but they are just as fast. There are now nine planets to explore instead of one city, so there is plenty of long term challenge here.

★ ACE RATING 935 ON ATARI ST

F-19 STEALTH FIGHTER

Microprose ● Atari ST £29.99 ●

Amiga £29.99 ● PC £39.99

A program that could well be described as the Flight Simulator's Flight Simulator. The PC version has enjoyed much success since its launch a year ago, and now it's brothers on the ST and Amiga look set to do the same. The sim is based around the much talked about (or perhaps that be whispered about) Stealth Fighter. It boasts four huge scenarios with hundreds of missions, and plenty of detail. If you are looking for the definitive flight sim, then you can't go far wrong with this one.

★ ACE RATING 935 ON IBM PC

GOLD OF THE AZTECS

US Gold ● Amiga £TBA ● Atari ST £TBA ● PC £TBA

Oh yes, very Indy Jones! A graphically-slick arcade adventure that casts you in the role of Bret Conrad, ex-US Special Forces and one-time CIA agent. Hacking through the jungle in pursuit of a lost Aztec tomb filled with gold, you must evade the clutches of savage pygmy headhunters, marauding elephants and innumerable booby-traps. Only those with quick-wits and fast-reactions need apply. The animation on the large, finely-drawn, sprites is incredible - Bret seems able to do anything! There's enough

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tension and excitement here to satisfy any arcade adventure freak.

★ **ACE RATING 868 ON AMIGA**

HARPOON

Mirrorsoft/PSS ● PC £29.99

Quite simply the best naval simulation to be released for the General Public. The battleset that comes with the game deals with East-West conflict in the North Sea, but other battlesets will be available soon. A clever system of three map types is used to effectively manage each mission. The nice thing about *Harpoon* is that the computer takes care of all the boring mechanics, allowing you to concentrate on broad tactics. A must buy for anyone interested in modern naval warfare.

★ **ACE RATING 940 ON IBM PC**

THE IMMORTAL

Electronic Arts ● Atari ST £24.99

● Amiga £24.99

Nothing new in the plot department, unfortunately. Old wizard...enter dungeon...defeat monsters...avoid traps...solve puzzles...rescue Grand Wizard...etc,etc. However, the presentation is something else. An isometric-3D angle is used to view the events, and your character moves around it freely, combating monsters and so on. Every move is beautifully animated. There are only 50 locations to visit, but every one is going to take a lot of work to puzzle through. **WARNING!** - this program only works on 1Mb machines!

★ **ACE RATING 910 ON ATARI ST**

INDIANAPOLIS 500

Electronic Arts ● PC £24.95 ●

Amiga £24.95

The ultimate racing game. *Indy 500* uses state of the art solid vector graphics which really add something to the high speed action. As in Activision's *Bomber* there are a variety of out-of-cockpit views to select from. The realistic handling of the cars will have you coming back to this game time and time again.

★ **ACE RATING 935 ON IBM PC**

LOTUS ESPRIT TURBO CHALLENGE

Gremlin Graphics ● 16-bit formats £24.99 ● 8-bit formats £10.99

Remember *Pit Stop II*? Gremlin obviously do, because this game employs a similar split-screen effect as that ageing classic to allow two players to race against each other at the same time. This, and the fact that the 3D effect actually does

convince you that you're travelling at the speed on your meter, puts Lotus way ahead of the rest of the pack. With 32 tracks, 3 difficulty levels and the option to choose between automatic and manual gears, this is one racing game with fair a bit of mileage.

★ **ACE RATING 875 ON AMIGA**

MIDWINTER

Microprose ● Atari ST £29.99 ●

Amiga £TBA ● PC £TBA

The latest mega hit from top programmer Mike Singleton, creator of *Lords of Midnight*. The game is set on a frozen island in the future. Your task is to recruit members of the Peace Force to fight off General Masters' invasion force. This is done by managing people and resources via a series of Fractal Maps and menus. The game has disappointing sound, but nice 3D graphics, and enough solid gameplay to keep you going for months.

★ **ACE RATING 948 ON ATARI ST**

MYTH

System 3 ● 8-bit formats

£8.99cs/£14.99dk

The game that pushes the C64 and Spectrum further than they have ever been before. Fight your way through several time zones to reach the ultimate confrontation with the god Dameron. The game is captivating not only because of its size and depth but also because of the superbly animated sprites and sheer playability.

★ **ACE RATING 925 ON C64**

OPERATION STEALTH

US Gold ● Amiga £24.99 ● Atari ST £24.99 ● PC £29.99

One of our 'planes is missing in this latest game from Delphine Software. As John Glames, you have to use all your wit and ingenuity to recover a Stealth Bomber hijacked from a US Airbase before the KGB get their hands on it. This Sierra Online style game is similar to Delphine's previous game, *Future Wars*, with all interaction effected by simply pointing and clicking the mouse. The graphics and animation are very entertaining, although sound is a little disappointing, and the game task should keep you going for a long while.

★ **ACE RATING 910 ON AMIGA**

POWERMONGER

Electronic Arts ● Amiga £29.99 ● Atari ST £29.99

A new computer classic, with the highest ACE rating ever. You play a

warlord, exiled from your homeland along with twenty followers, who has just landed on the shores of 200 islands, ripe for conquering. Unfortunately the current residents are not quite so keen on your enforced leadership, and will do all they can to resist you. Using a similar viewpoint to *Populous*, the landscape is here polygon-based and thus can be manipulated in just about any way you require. The excellent visuals are supported by highly atmospheric sound. All control is by mouse, and couldn't be easier. To play it is to worship it. An absolutely essential buy.

★ ACE RATING 973 ON AMIGA

RICK DANGEROUS 2

Microstyle ● 16-bit formats £24.99 ● 8-bit formats £9.99cs/£14.99dk
After his Indy-inspired adventures in the prequel, Rick looks to the stars and dons leotard and blond quiff for his second run-in with the Fat Man. Set over five levels, the game generously allows the player to take on the first four in any order. The graphics and sounds are nice, but not stunning. With platform games playability is everything, and *RD2* has it in buckets.

★ ACE RATING 870 ON ATARI ST

SAVAGE EMPIRE

Origin/Mindscape ● PC £34.99 ● Amiga £TBA

Using the *Ultima VI* interface, Origin have taken a side-step from the medieval world of their previous games, and now plunge you into a nightmare scenario where you control a party of characters mysteriously transported to a dinosaur-infested Lost World, full to the brim with new quests. A rollicking good yarn well told and - hard to believe we know - actually better than *Ultima VI*.

★ ACE RATING 955 ON IBM PC

the option to shut down extraneous animation scenes reduces this.

★ ACE RATING 910 ON IBM PC

SIMULCRA

Microstyle ● Amiga £24.99 ● Atari ST £24.99

In the future, physical conflict is a thing of the past, with all wars being fought in Cyberspace. However, a virus has caused the simulated battles to spill into 'true' reality. You must enter the 'battle matrix', destroy the rampaging simulcraft and ultimately the matrix itself. Although basically a shoot-'em-up, with the usual variety of add-ons to pick up, *Simulcra's* claim to fame is the incredible rotating patchwork 3D world where the combat takes place. Fast and furious action, excellent aesthetics and a slight strategy element make this one of the best games of the year.

★ ACE RATING 936 ON ATARI ST

TEAM YANKEE

Empire International ● Amiga £29.99 ● Atari ST £29.99 ● PC £34.99

The interesting use of 3D bit-mapped graphics to depict the action rather than the expected

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All the games in **HOT OFF THE SHELF** - this month's software selection - have been released in the last few months and should be readily available from your local dealer or by mail-order. We've chosen the titles carefully to ensure that, if one should take your fancy, it ought to be readily available. Don't forget that most dealers will be happy to order titles for you if they haven't got them in stock.

However, the truly discerning player knows full well that some of the greatest games of all time are not generally available in the shops. ACE is compiling a listing of History's Greatest Games - but we've hit a few snags. Our main problem has been that software houses tend not to keep records on their older games and we have still a lot of detective work to do to locate stocks (if they exist) of older titles. However, we do hope to have the listing ready for the New Year - our apologies for the delay.

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polygons pays off in this involving tank war simulation. Although they get a little blocky close-up, this is more than compensated for by their speed and detail (half the trick is being able to correctly identify your own vehicles and not fire on them!). You control a four tank platoon, which you can switch between with ease, on a wide range of missions. Early accessibility but mounting in complexity as you gain experience make this a perfect purchase for any strategist from novice to master.

★ ACE RATING 893 ON AMIGA

THEIR FINEST HOUR: THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN

Lucasfilm ● Atari ST £24.99dk ● Amiga £24.99dk ● PC £24.99dk
World War II air combat relived in this superlative flight sim. You have the opportunity to fly a variety of WWII craft from the Spitfire to the Hurricane. A neat option is the camera which records your flight and can be replayed to assess your performance. You can also fly on both sides! Great game on all available formats, but particularly recommended for PC owners – gameplay of this stature on the PC is rare.

★ ACE RATING 933 ON IBM PC

VAXINE

US Gold ● Amiga £24.99 ● Atari ST/E £19.99 ● PC £24.99
Bizarre! Set inside the human body, you have to protect your host's vital cells from attack by rampaging viruses. Each virus is represented by a coloured bouncing ball. You must skim of the rapidly scrolling checkerboard tissuescape, hunt down the attacking cells, and zap them with antidote of the same colour as the viruses. Far more intellectually-demanding than it might at first appear, *Vaxine* is a truly original game with gorgeous ray-traced graphics that tests both your reflexes and your brain.

★ ACE RATING 905 ON ATARI ST

WING COMMANDER

Origin/Mindscape ● Amiga £TBA ● PC £34.99

Another 3D space combat game, but any sense of déjà vu is completely dispelled by the use of stunning ray-traced and digitised graphics for the spaceships. They rotate, shrink and grow with amazing speed and fluidity. Animated scenes punctuate the action and present the first true cinematic experience on a home computer. The multitude of missions mean this isn't a game

of surface gloss. Sadly only on PC at the moment, and then best appreciated on the higher speed models.

★ ACE RATING 949 ON IBM PC

WONDERLAND

Magnetic Scrolls ● Amiga £29.99 ● Atari ST £29.99 ● PC £34.99
The Scrolls, having stunned the world with *The Pawn* way back in 1987, return with a new classic. An adventure game based on the famous novel *Alice in Wonderland*, the plot follows the book enough to retain its weird flavour but not so slavishly as to make it solvable by simply knowing the story. The lavish text, teeming with hundreds of tough (but logical) puzzles, is accompanied by a number of stunning animated graphic scenes. All adventure fans kneel and pray - an essential buy.

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XIPHOS

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possible solution to the turmoil (plus hefty wadges of cash into the bargain). Although initially smacking of the classic *Elite*, *Xiphos* differs in that it can appeal to those looking for a long-term task and those looking for a straight blast, due to the 'Raid' mode. With top-notch 3D polygon graphics and atmospheric sound, *Xiphos*' only real failing is its slight lack of originality.

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★ ACE RATING 950 ON IBM PC

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ACE DIARY

DECEMBER

2 - 8 DECEMBER SOFTWARE RELEASES

Accolade: Stratego (PC £24.99). Military board game conversion.

US Gold: Indy Double Pack (ST, Amiga £24.99, PC £29.99). Last Crusade plus Zak McCracken in a single box. **Nightshift** (Amiga, ST £24.99, Spectrum, C64, CPC tape £9.99, disk £14.99). Do your stint at the IML factory and earn a fortune. **Crimewave** (Amiga, ST, PC £24.99). **Powercrash** (PC £29.99). Coin-op compilation comprising **Outrun**, **Strider**, **Forgotten World**, **Thunderblade** and **Last Duel**. **Strider II - No Limits**, **No Mercy** (C64, CPC tape £9.99, disk £14.99). Follow up to the Capcom coin-op.

Domark: Hard Drivin' II (ST, Amiga £24.99; PC £29.99). Four more circuits, faster action and a track editor to design your own stunt driving.

Palace: Dragon's Breath (PC £29.99)

Image Works: Speedball 2 (Amiga £24.99). Bitmap Brothers' vision of an intergalactic sporting life.

Mindscape: Ultimate Ride (Amiga, ST £24.99). Days of Thunder (Spectrum, C64 tape £9.99, disk £14.99). From the film; in fact, quite possibly substantially better than the film. **Life and Death** (ST, £24.99). Budding brain surgeons can test their surgical skills here. **4D Sports Driving** (PC £29.99)

Electronic Arts: Dragon Wars (Amiga £24.99) **Lord of the Rings** (PC £29.99). **Bard's Tale III** (PC £29.99). New format for well-established cult role-player.

Ocean: Battle Command (ST, Amiga £24.99, PC £29.99).

Follow up to **Carrier Command**.

Virgin: Aerial Assault (Sega Master System £29.99) **Ultima IV** (Sega Master System £39.99). Popular strategy game in surprise console appearance. **World Cup Italia 90** (Sega Master System £TBA) **Columns** (Sega Master System £29.99)

Novagen: Damocles Mission Disk 1 (ST, Amiga £9.99). More planets, more flights, more objects. Needs original **Damocles** to run.

Saturday 8

Computer Shopper show, Wembley Exhibition Centre. Loads bargains in the world of games, add-ons (music, graphics, DTP, you name it) and hardware.

Sunday 9

National Day, Tanzania. Last day of the Computer Shopper show (see above for details).

Monday 10

End of the grouse shooting season.

Tuesday 11

Wednesday 12
National Day, Kenya.

Thursday 13

Friday 14

9-14 DECEMBER SOFTWARE RELEASES

Cinemaware: It Came from the Desert (PC £34.99). Twin Peaks with giant ants. **Spectrum Holobyte: Flight of the Intruder** (Amiga, ST £29.99). Flight sim based on various aircraft in Vietnam.

Electronic Arts: Zany Golf (Sega Megadrive £39.99) **John Madden's American Football** (Sega Megadrive £39.99). **American Footie** action game created in fine detail. **Battle Squadron** (Sega Megadrive £39.99) **Imperium** (PC £29.99). Skulduggery and intrigue in the Roman Empire.

US Gold: Dragonstrike (C64 disk only £14.99) **Sega Master Mix** (Amiga, ST £24.99, Spectrum, C64, CPC tape £9.99, disk £14.99). Compilation.

Accolade: Star Control (Spectrum, C64, CPC £10.99 tape, £16.99 disk)

Virgin: Populous (Sega Megadrive £39.99). Bullfrog's civilisation creator nails the lie that consoles are only good for arcade games. **Budokan** (Sega Megadrive £39.99). Get your kicks from a series of martial arts tests. **World Cup Italia 90** (Sega Megadrive £29.99). Better late than never, I guess. **Ghostbusters** (Sega Megadrive £34.99)

Dinamic: Narco Police (ST, Amiga, PC £24.99, CPC tape £9.99, disk £14.99). Programmed by development team 'on the spot' in South America, narcotics squad against evil, etc, drug barons.

Ocean: NARC (ST, Amiga £24.99, PC £29.99, Spectrum, C64, CPC tape £10.99, disk £15.99). **Total Recall** (ST, Amiga £24.99, PC £29.99, Spectrum, C64, CPC tape £10.99, disk £15.99). Beefcake shoot 'em up, much like its licensed character.

Don't forget!

Starting next month, ACE will always be on sale on 8th of every month!

Saturday 15

All Formats Computer show, New Horticultural Halls, London SW1. Cut-price hardware, software and peripherals.

Sunday 16

Monday 17

Tuesday 18

Death penalty for murder formally abolished in Britain on this day in 1969.

Wednesday 19

Thursday 20

Friday 21

15-21 DECEMBER SOFTWARE RELEASES

If the software houses haven't got their products in the shops by now, it's a safe bet you won't see them until after Christmas. As far as publishing goes, you can consider the industry closed for the next fortnight.

Saturday 22

Shortest day of the year today. Lie in and you'll miss it ... Speed limit of 70 mph was introduced in Britain on this day in 1965.

Sunday 23

Monday 24

Christmas Eve. Last minute dash round shops for presents.

Tuesday 25

Christmas Day. Open presents, eat turkey, watch TV film, fall asleep.

Wednesday 26

Boxing Day (Bank Holiday)

Thursday 27

Friday 28

Saturday 29

Sunday 30

Monday 31

New Year's Eve

JANUARY 1991

Tuesday 1

New Year's Day (Bank Holiday); National Day, Cuba; National Day, Sudan; National Day, Haiti. Britain became a member of the EEC on this day in 1973.

Wednesday 2

Thursday 3

Friday 4

National Day, Burma

Saturday 5

22 DEC - 5 JAN SOFTWARE RELEASES

Thalion: Enchanted Land (ST £24.99). Cutesy runaround game.

Ocean: Sim Earth (PC £29.99, Apple Mac £TBA). Maxis's follow-up to **Sim City** on a massive scale.

Psygnosis: Carthage (ST £24.99). Arcade/strategy game set in the Carthage of the Roman Empire.

Rainbird: Elite Plus (PC) Updated version of the classic trading game which takes account of all those VGA monitors out there.

Micro Style: War Jeep (ST, Amiga £24.99)

PSS: Champion of the Raj (Amiga, ST, PC £24.99) Territorial strategy game based in 19th century India.

PSS: Harpoon (Amiga £29.99)

Planning an event?

Let the Diary Editor know! Telephone Christina on 081 446 4813

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THERE'S ONE NEAR YOU!

ACE DEALS

They're here, they're there, they're every-bloomin'-where. Like Santa Claus, the Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles have that uncanny ability to be in more than one place at once.

At any rate, during December, the Turtles will be much in evidence, notably at **Software Circus** in The Plaza in London's Oxford Street on December 3, where they will be making a personal appearance. Then on December 18, the Turtles will be strolling into the brand new **Microbyte** outlet in the Meadow Hall centre in Sheffield.

Liverpool's **City Software** also has a Turtle extravaganza planned for December so if you live in the Liverpool area, look out for more details.

City Software is also stocking up with lots of Christmas present ideas, with special accessory gift packs, such as computer cleaning kits, or blank disks, disk boxes and mouse mats in a single package. Could be just the thing for the computer owner who already has everything.

Also at **City Software**, look out for special offers on Amiga second disk drives and half megabyte memory upgrades. Staying with the Amiga, all **Microbyte** stores are giving away a free demo disk with any Amiga purchase worth over £12.50. Contents of the free disks vary, but most include demos of brand new and forthcoming games for the machine.

And if you're wondering where to do your Christmas shopping, there are new computer games shops popping up all over the place. There are brand new **Virgin Games Centres** opening in the first week of this month in Oxford (in the Westgate Centre) and Kingston upon Thames (at 64-66 Clarence Street). In the Cardiff Service Centre on Crichton Street, the new Virgin Megastore has a Games Centre section within it - should also be open by the time you read this.

Microbyte also has three new shops - in Sheffield, as detailed above; at 129 St George's Walk, St John's Centre, Liverpool, and Friargate Walk in St George's Centre, Preston. Microbyte promises there will be sales and special offers at all three new stores, so if you live

Our regular column highlighting special offers around the country. Check it out before you head off to the shops for your Xmas splash out...

nearby, drop in and pick up a bargain or two.

There are also two new shops in the **Computer Store** chain: in the Broadmarsh Centre in Nottingham, and at Pinstone Street, Sheffield. Actress Sally Ann Matthews (Jenny Bradley in Coronation Street, and a self-confessed Sega nut) will be making a personal appearance at the Sheffield outlet sometime soon - check with the store for details.

WHERE TO LOOK FOR THEM

City Software is on Lime Street, Liverpool.

There are **Microbyte** stores in the Arndale Centre, Manchester; the Broadmarsh Centre, Nottingham; Kirkgate, Wakefield; the Metro Centre, Gateshead; the Greenmarket, Newcastle Upon Tyne; the Kirkgate Centre, Bradford; the Bull Ring Centre, Birmingham; the County Arcade, Leeds; Pasture Road, Goole; Meadow Hall Centre, Sheffield; St John's Centre, Liverpool, and St George's Centre, Preston.

Virgin has its **Games Centre** outlets on London's Oxford Street (at Marble Arch, within the Megastore, and at no 100), Bristol, Kingston and Oxford, and also in Megastores in Belfast, Birmingham, Brighton, Cardiff, Dublin, Edinburgh, Glasgow (at Union St and Argyle St), Leeds, and Nottingham.

Both **Software Circus** outlets are in London's West End; one in The Plaza, Oxford Street, the other at 282, High Holborn, London WC1.

The **Computer Store** chain is based in Yorkshire, with shops at Printing Office St, Doncaster; Ivegate, Bradford; Trinity St Arcade, Leeds; Market Place, Huddersfield; Westmoreland St, Wakefield; St Sampson's Square, York; The Woolshops, Halifax; Market St, Barnsley; High Street, Scunthorpe; Pinstone Street, Sheffield, and the Broadmarsh Centre, Nottingham.

All offers and promotions are subject to availability of stock.

Although we do our best to ensure our dealer promotion information is accurate at the time of going to press, ACE cannot take any responsibility for changes or cancellations to dealers' plans.

Attention dealers! Don't keep your promotions, competitions, special offers, etc, a secret. Tell us at ACE and we'll tell everybody else.

SHOP WATCH!

Software seller Dirk Longhorn reckons that Nintendo could be getting their act together in the UK in a big way...

It was way back in 1987 when the Sega and Nintendo consoles were unveiled in this country: I thought at the time that, of the two, the Sega was by far the most attractive and we duly stocked the system as soon as it was available. As the range of titles grew, the more popular the machine became, and the following Christmas (1988) the Sega system once again cleaned up by being the only console to be stocked by many computer stores (ourselves included).

During 1989, however, the whisper was that Nintendo were going to do to this country what they had done to America (i.e. totally infiltrate teen and pre-teen culture. We looked again at the system; we looked at the incredibly high price of what was available; we looked at each other. 'Nah! It'll never happen over here,' we said.

Nevertheless, we still decided to stock the machine and the associat-

ed software; if for no other reason than to offer it as an alternative to the getting-more-unreliable-by-the-tear home computers. While not exactly selling like the proverbial 'magazine on a disk' (that's just Dirk being sarcastic - I hope none of you have subscribed to Rampage), it did sell in respectable quantities, even though some of the comments regarding the price of the software were far too rude to repeat here.

This year, though, it must be said that the marketing man at Nintendo has done it. There's a huge demand for consoles and the (small) range of software. This is because of huge ad-spends and the absurd number of Win a FABULOUS Nintendo compos everywhere.

The other reason is of course the Turtles. Nobody can argue with their popularity this Christmas and Nintendo have certainly got it right here.

Unfortunately, there's a bug in the lettuce: a shortage of Nintendo consoles in any form. A certain high-street multiple seems to have plenty (surely unfair to the Nintendo Independent dealers who've ploughed a hollow trough for so long?), however, so at least we can sell those new owners Nintendo software.

Well, er, there's another bug here, actually. Virtually every title is in short supply. Ironic, eh? We couldn't sell the machines for months, and now we can't get the software.

Talking of Nintendo, I had a lady return a copy of Ghosts'n'Goblins to us last week. She tossed it imperiously on the counter and loudly proclaimed that it didn't work. I made the usual 'well, that's very unusual noises' and exchanged the cartridge for another.

She returned a few hours later very red in the face. She wanted to see the manager and have a refund and all her bus fare refunded. After much huffing, I tried both copies in front of her to demonstrate that they did indeed work.

'But what about two players??', she blurted out. I explained that I didn't think that this particular game had a two player option, but if it did then the two players would take turns to play.

Ahem. It turned out that madam had been trying to play the game with her friend Rob...Rob the Nintendo Robot, that is. And, to the best of my knowledge, there are only two readily available games that work with the little plastic beast.

'But,' she said, 'the man in well-known-high-street-store said that I could use the robot with all games - that's why I bought the flipping system!'

I suggested she return to this shop. And, as she left, it was with difficulty that I refrained from yelling 'and don't forget to mention the bus fare...'

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ADVENTURELINE

Stuck in an adventure? Write in with the name of the game and the nature of your problem. Be as specific as possible and I'll do my best to answer (on these pages only so no SAEs please), and if I don't know the answer, I know a man who.....! News, tips, gossip, anecdotes and adventuring trivia are also all most welcome. Write to me, Pat Winstanley, Adventureline, Pink Box, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London, EC1R 3AU

NOW HEAR THIS!

If you want to contribute to these pages, get your pen out and start scribbling! Particularly welcome are short, self-contained hints and single problem solutions. I'm also interested to hear of PD and Shareware programs - the best will be reviewed (space permitting), as I've done with *Jungle Bungle* here. So get in touch!

LEISURE SUIT LARRY 1

Completing Augustus De Silva's solution

Having passed by the bouncer, enter the disco and ignore all the other Leisure Suit men. Sit by a girl called Fawn. Look at her to see some nice graphics, now use spray to make her smile. Give her the rose and candy and offer her the ring as marriage. Then get Larry to dance with fawn (note: Larry will do a 360 degree move that has to be seen to be believed - as shown in Saturday Night Fever). Walk to the shop and purchase a magazine and a cheap bottle of wine. Give it to the sailor and he should hand you a knife. If he doesn't, offer him money. You should have given Fawn \$400 towards the Honeymoon Suite and she will head for the Quickie Wed. Go to the Quickie Wed by cab. Ignore the flasher and enter. Give the \$100 to the vicar. Once you are married walk to the casino and enter the hotel at the back. Enter the lift and go to the fourth floor. Knock on the door with the heart. Once inside, turn on the radio and when an advert for Ajax Liquor Company is heard, note the phone number. Leave the hotel and the casino and hail a

cab to go to the shops. When you get out, use the phone on the lamp post to order champagne. (Always say please or they will say "OK but I doubt you'll ever see it."). Now cab it back to the casino and the 4th floor. Knock on the door again and Fawn will let you in. Give her the champagne you ordered - it should be on the shelf. It will be censored again but this time Fawn gets out a rope and ties you up. Have no fear as you can use the sailor's knife to free yourself. Pick up the rope and read your magazine then go back to Leftie's. Knock on the cushioned door again and say the password. The pimp will still be watching TV. Go up the stairs and ignore the prostitute, instead climb out of the window and tie the rope to the fire escape and yourself. Use the hammer on the window and pick up the pills. Climb down the fire escape and get a cab back to the casino. Go to the hotel and to the 4th floor. Knock on the door with the heart and give the pills to Fawn. Make her swallow the pills and she should turn sex-mad. Don't turn down an opportunity like this. Afterwards, go to the 8th floor and go to the bar where you will meet Eve. And you know what anyone called Eve wants - an apple, you jerk!

JUNGLE BUNGLE

Written by Len Tucker Amiga £3.50 - Licenceware AMOS PD Library 25 Park Road Wigan WN6 7AA

Rarely do adventures combine the elements to keep both old and young alike glued to the screen. Built-in simplicity for children tends to bore adults, while complexities to keep adults happy quickly put off children. Now, from the AMOS Library comes a rare example of overall appeal in the shape of *Jungle Bungle*.

The game is set, predictably, in the jungle where your plane has crashed. Your task is (simply?) to return to civilisation. The game is entirely icon driven with short, clear text responses well within the capabilities of early readers.

Puzzles are of the "find the right object and use it in the right place" style, but more devious than they first appear. For instance, in the course of the game you must keep eating and drinking to survive, and while there is plenty of food around, there is also a light fingered

monkey which keeps raiding your backpack until you figure out how to stop him. Very annoying when he pinches your last banana just as you were about to avoid starvation. And if you don't have any bananas with you, he beats you up instead.

Water is a simple necessity for survival but its collection is not so simple. Instead of ready made supplies for the taking you must collect your own by catching tropical raindrops in your bottle. Although I dislike arcade sequences in adventures, for once it becomes fun rather than annoying, and adds another dimension to the game.

The biggest difficulty I had with this game was not being able to play it while the kids were around - they kept pinching the mouse. So I had to stoop to clandestine play, only to watch puzzles which had kept me up into the early hours fall prey to devious young minds seemingly effortlessly!

Although shorter than most commercial offerings, the game is an easy match for quality and well worth the pitifully low price. Highly recommended for all a

LET ME KNOW!

If there's any special subject you'd like to see covered in Adventureline, then let me know at the address in the panel on the left.

LEISURE SUIT LARRY 2

The second part of a complete solution from Augustus De Silva

Right! Now that you are a millionaire you can go to the posh shop, Moloto Lira and buy some half price swim shorts. Go back to Eve's house and the trash cans outside should contain your passport. Pick it up as you'll need it for the cruise then go for a haircut and buy some sunscreen from the drugstore. Return to the Quickie Mart for a jumbo sized cool drink, then head for the music store. Chatting up the Spanish girl here will get you involved in Dr Nookie's evil plans so don't trust anyone as the KGB are after you. Say no to the man outside the saloon then get on the boat, showing your passport and ticket to the captain. When on board use map A (Cruise). Go to the barber. This guy is just as bad as the last barber as he gives you an expensive wig made from a mop. Next go to the bar (or nightclub) but don't buy a drink as the barman is a KGB agent. Just pick up the spinach dip and head for your cabin. Pick up the fruit and enter the other room. There you will meet Barbara's mum, and after she has said her piece leave and close the door behind you.

ZAK McKRACKEN

Another helping of Mike Bareham's solution.

You should now be controlling Leslie. Walk to the first massive door on the left. Use the ladder on the pedestal then pick up the crystal sphere. This will open the massive door. Pick up the ladder and walk through the door, then turn on the flashlight. Use the enclosed map called "Mars Face" and make your way to the generator room. When you are there turn on both switches until both gauges are pointing at the green bit. Then take off your helmet. Now use the map again to find your way to the map room. When you get there, read the strange markings on the wall, make a diagram of them, and call them No. 2.

Switch to Zak. Open the door of Lou's Loans and go in. You should now have won the lotto. If it hasn't been picked just wait around outside for a while then go back in. If it has been picked then you will have won \$10,000 which you will need for spending. Go back outside the shop and make your way to the bus. Use the kazoo. Use the cashcard in the card reader when the door opens. Use the reservations terminal and buy a ticket to Miami. Walk to the plane. Use the reservations terminal and buy a ticket to Cairo. Walk to the plane. Walk outside and walk to the right until you come to the sphinx. Look at the legs to see which has the strange markings on it. When you find the markings use the yellow crayon on the markings. Now draw diagram No. 2 which will open a secret door. Go through the secret door and use the map enclosed called "Sphinx Map" to find the room with the secret panel in it. Make your way to this room, and when you get there, switch to Annie.

CAPTIVE

A few hints to get you started.

Walls - If on ballbearings, push using right mouse button on the forward icon - don't push too far or you might cover something interesting.

Power - Poke your finger in the sockets then touch the chests of the androids to recharge them. But don't touch anything else or you'll blow it up. A charged finger makes a useful weapon in the early stages if you want to fight from a distance.

Sockets become more scarce in the later stages, so take every opportunity to top up.

Maps - Buy Optic III, the mapper, as soon as possible. Keep it running continuously (but watch your power) to show areas yet to be visited. Optic V acts as a compass and used in conjunction with the mapper helps early orientation.

Money - Save it. You'll need loads to restore your health when you meet heavier monsters.

Stairs - Jump up or down stairs when a monster is directly above or below for a satisfying smart-bomb effect!

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Cosmo's Message for the Month.

"Yo Dudes, Cosmo ere. Dis is da first time I've bin in ACE, da mag looks ok from ere. Anyway Dudes and Dudettes look at the stuff on dis page its totally well ard. Mr Mike and the GLC crew's bin workin on it for ages.

"Anyhows Dudes, just a note for thems of you that pop into our showroomy thing in Highams Parky place, Mr Mike has got in some new dude to work for me, name of NILBOG, stupid name if yous askin me but Mr Mike is da Boss. So Ta Ta for now Dudes and member you can't loose with a firm thats run by a Teddy Bear.

Cosmo.



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Until recently, we've been offering £25 cash prizes to winners of the ACE puzzle and crossword, but several people have been asking us for games instead. From now on all prizes will be in software, so please make sure you include your name, address, and machine format when you enter.

CLUES ACROSS

- 5 Game putting Max in disarray (5)
 7 Finger a student put on type of computer (7)
 9 Game giving one a sharp feeling of pain (4)
 10 Chained to a game from US Gold (8)
 11 Nothing in new Acorn to provide light (6)
 14 Grudge about game from Linel (6)
 17 Constable taking motor for provider of console games (2,6)
 18 Managed to get across Ubi Soft game (4)
 19 It's developed by Omega for hand-held entertainment (4,3)
 20 Person tending to cast runes (5)

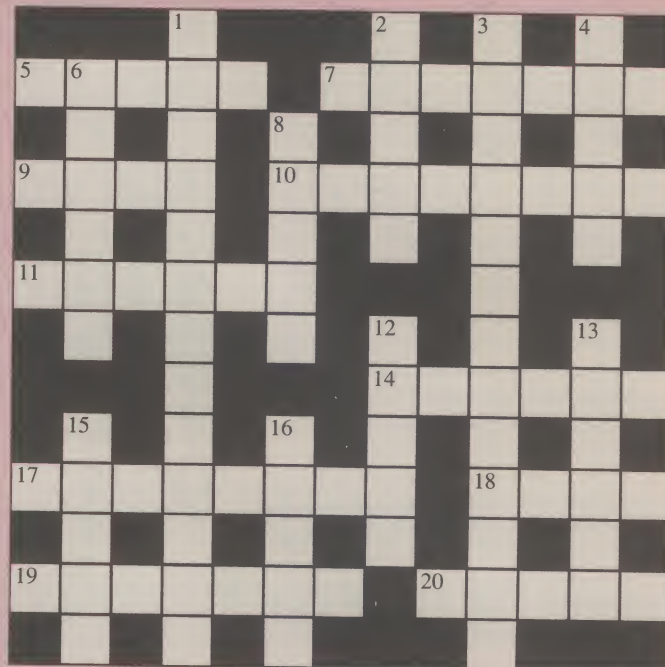
MINI QUIZ!

Consider yourself a genius (well, almost) if you can answer these questions correctly. Answers are on the Blitter End (page 178).

1. How many creatures, in the original game, lurk beneath the Trap Door?
2. What is the colour of Bomb Jack's Cape?
3. What came from the desert?
4. Which brand of sweets were advertised in Gremlin's game T-Wrecks?

Write and tell us if you got them right! We won't believe you!

Our monthly prize word puzzler, set by the inimitable MIPS



CLUES DOWN

- 1 Mad WREN coming round to play military game (4,9)
 2 Game - you can find it in brown case (5)
 3 Game Boy it's not safe to be with! (4,9)
 4 Gapes surprisingly at parts of magazine (5)
 6 Non-digital type of computer from Angola (6)
 8 Awful waste of a game (5)
 12 Computer that's a snake in the grass! (5)
 13 Game played in nets (6)
 15 A software house in the main (5)
 16 Point out it's an aid to climbing (5)

HOW TO ENTER

Every month we offer a free game worth up to £25 for your machine if you're the sender of the first correct crossword solution out of the hat. The address to send your solution to is:
 ACE January 91 Crossword,
 Priory Court
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 The deadline for entries is always the first Thursday of the month named on the cover. In this case, it's Thursday 3rd January 1991.

DON'T MISS THE MEGA QUIZ!

Next month we're celebrating the New Year with a real test of computer games know-how - and you'll be able to test your score against some of the big names in the business! Find out how much people REALLY know about games...in ACE issue 41.

SOLUTION TO DECEMBER 90 CROSSWORD

As ACE has now changed its release dates (see Blitter End), we will be printing the solution to December's crossword in the next issue (February 91, Issue 41). After all, we can't go giving away the answers before the closing date, eh? The winner will be announced in the same issue.

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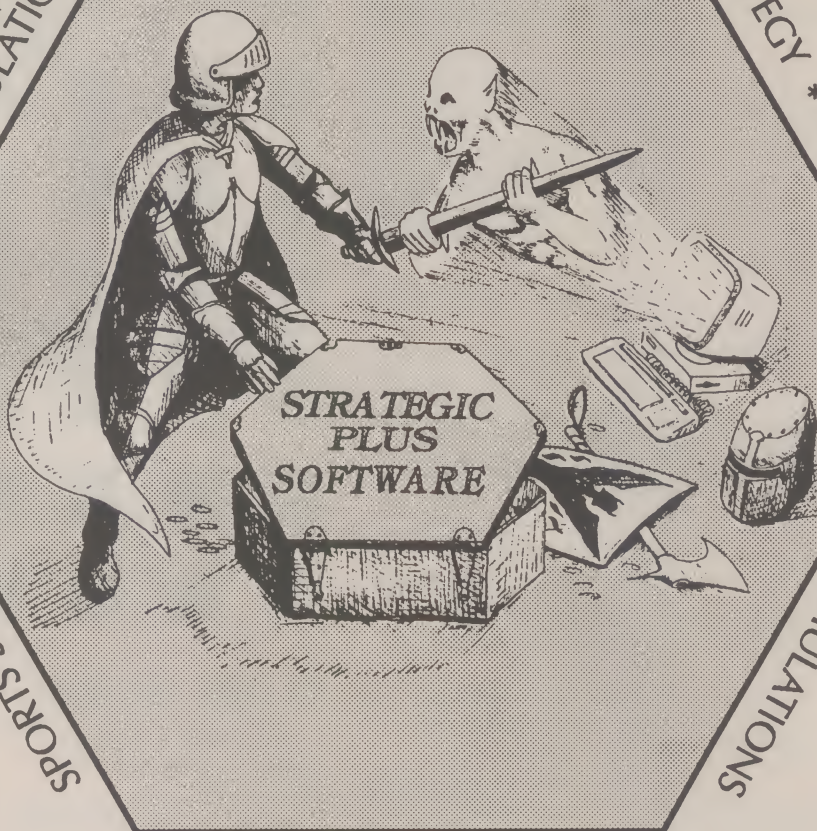
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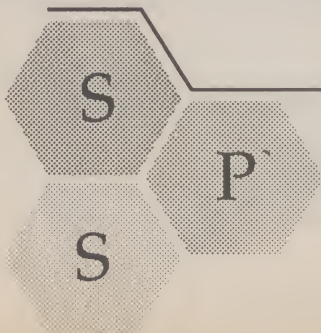


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PLUMB CRAZY

Atari ST £3.50 - Joystick

Every once in a while comes a game that's so different, so simple and so incredibly addictive it achieves instant stardom. *Plumb Crazy* is not one of these – but it's based on one of the most recent – *Pipe Mania*. The story of how it came about is simple: the author went round to a friend's house, had a go at the original, thought "How much!" went home and wrote his own version in STOS... Nasty words like plagiarism, look and feel, and even piracy spring to mind.

But this sort of thing is rife in the software industry – especially games produced by amateurs – so it's worth taking a look at. Older readers might just remember Nolan Bushnell's aromatically titled, *Pong*. This was the original table tennis game and arguably the thing that started the ball rolling. The idea quickly developed into *Breakout* which later formed the basis for *Arkanoid* – and its associated clones.

Then there's *Panic*, which probably spawned the plethora of platform games: *Psygnosis' Barbarian*, *Bubble Bobble*, *Manic Miner*, *Chuckie Egg* to name but a few. The fact is, new ideas are rarer than 24 carat diamonds and just as

precious. No matter how good an idea might seem, someone, somewhere is bound to have seen something like it before and *Plumb Crazy* is just a dim reflection of *Pipe Mania*.

The idea of the game is simple – all good ideas are. All you have to do is construct a pipeline of x pieces inside a set time limit – a bit like a jigsaw puzzle. Sound easy – don't you believe it. The "pieces", shapes like left-hand-bend, junction etc., appear in a set pattern each turn and one must be placed before another appears. The fluid in the pipe only flows one way so all the pipes must connect correctly. Later screens see the introduction of ONE-WAY pipes more pieces and less time. It just keeps getting harder. Control is by Joystick only, somewhere STOS is a little weak, so a mouse or keyboard option would be nice. How about another version Keith?

No one can doubt the origins of the idea but does it really matter. It's the game that counts

SHAMELESS PLUG

Once again thanks to: Sandra "Can I Pick 'Em?" Sharkey, The AMOS PD Library, 25 Park Road, Wigan, Lancs. WN6 7AA. Tel: (0942) 495261.

and the author of *Plumb Crazy* has done the game playing public proud. It's addictive enough to drive most people round the U bend. So much so, it almost became grounds for divorce in one household. Wait for it: it was the husband that couldn't get on his machine because the wife wanted to play! She'd even get up at six o'clock JUST to get her morning fix. In this office it's already caused three stand up fights and this writer had to be surgically removed from the ST just to write the feature. And you thought PD software was dull! Even if you have "the original" get this – you'd be plumb crazy not to. An Amiga version is promised – I can't wait!

DM-GENESIS

Amiga £NA - Mouse

Designer Mouseware, the inventors of Charityware – best known for the Amiga utility, *Sleepy 3* – would like prospective cheat writers to know about *DM-Genesis*, the "Solutions Creator". A Solutions Creator is like a reference book on a disk – solutions are built from a series

of screens which can be browsed using a simple text viewer. Up to ten cross-references can be attached to each screen which can either call up other screens in the database or run external programs – to incorporate graphics, sounds etc. Each solution can have a maximum of 200 menu items and a virtually unlimited number of screens. Typical search times from floppy disk based on a 100K database are under a second.

According to the Designer Mouseware team, the system could be used to create simple "paperback" adventures like those made famous by Steve Jackson or complete software manuals. It should be around by the time you read this on Amiga, with ST and PC versions to follow. By the way, the Amiga version of *DM-Genesis* was written by Yours Truly.

JUNGLE BUNGLE

Amiga £3.50 - Mouse

This is an absolute must for adventure fiends – and anyone contemplating fifty quid on the AMOS package, because beside being another fantastic demo of what can be done in AMOS it's a beautiful game. It's so good my learned colleague, Pat Winstanley (*ACE ADVENTURELINE*) and I, refuse to write any more about it until our esteemed editor gives us a colour page on which to rave over it, so there. Kids from about 12 years upward should find this a real treat – look out *Magnetic Scrolls*...

MIX N' MATCH

ST £3.50 - Mouse

Keith Feeny (*Plumb Crazy*) has been at it again, only this time he's prepared something to really make your brain itch – a version of *Pelmanism*! If there's two things that stick out from one of Mr Feeny's offerings it's style and addictiveness. *Mix n' Match*, does not have the all engrossing, grab you by the throat, appeal of his other title but it does a fair job. You start with a set of blank cards and by selecting two at random try to find matching pairs. Sounds dull – but especially in this incarnation it becomes a great challenge to develop mental agility – memory. The three difficulty levels determine the pictures used from easy to incredibly hard – "Right, that's one brown flask and a green one, with the brown one in front, errr..." Adding to the "fun", Keith has used some weird sound effects which border on ethereal in quality. One for people with a "particular" taste in games – but a very high-quality implementation nevertheless.

Stay tuned for next month's PD games instalment – more gamepower for less cash!

WE WANT YOU

"Cor blimey mate – they haven't covered *Revenge Of The Mutant Hero Terrapins*." Well, if I haven't seen it, I can hardly write about it. Drop YOUR PD/Shareware game to Mark Smiddy, Co. ACE Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, LONDON, EC1R 3AU marking your envelope in LARGE LETTERS "PINK PD". Remember – if you don't tell the world, the world won't sign cheques!

BACK ISSUES

Back issues are available for all issues from ACE 4 inclusive (except ACE 11) at the giveaway price of £2.50 each in the UK and £3.50 each for overseas. These prices include post and packaging (surface mail). Overseas readers wanting airmail delivery should enquire as to the cost at the address below, listing the issues required.

To order, clearly list the required issue numbers and send them, along with your full name and address and a cheque or postal order for the full payment made payable to ACE magazine, to: **ACE Back Issues, PO Box 500, Leicester LE99 6AA.**

• **ASAT (AVIONICS SITUATIONAL AWARENESS TRAINER)**, combat flight simulator for the US Air Force by Perceptics. Uses Falcon software by Spectrum Holobyte/Mirrorsoft. Features include: networking for multi-player action, tactile feedback and fingertip weapon selection. [ACE14]

• **BATMAN DIGITAL JUSTICE** is the world's first interactive hypercomic by Pepe Moreno. "Digital is the art medium of the future." [ACE30]

• **BATTLETECH**, "the world's first complete computer simulation for play", featuring multi-player cockpits equipped with 40Mhz 16 million colour graphics processors, stereo spatial sound

ACE Back Issues can expand your collection – and your mind. Here's a checklist of topics covered in previous mags...

and lifelike controls as you command 31st century Mechs. [ACE28]

• **CD-I** (Compact Disc Interactive) is destined to become the entertainment and education medium of the 90's. [ACE9/21/22/24/32/33/35]. Check out Issue 30 for multi-media principles (hypermedia in particular) and issue 24 for a preview of the Philips CD-I system.

• **CDTV**, Commodore's attempt to bring multi-media to the mass-market. An Amiga with built-in CD-ROM drive and CD-audio capability, redesigned to look like a VCR. [ACE34]

• **COSMIC OSMO**, the world's first hypergame – courtesy of Cyan Software/Activision. Check out issue 23 for the first review, issue 24 for a feature on hypergames, and issue 30 for general hypermedia coverage. New Osmo CD-ROM version featured in issue 36.

• **FLARE TECHNOLOGY**, trio of talented Cambridge-based games hardware engineers. Their custom-designed Flare One micro formed

the basis of the Konix console. [ACE11]

• **FUJITSU FM TOWNS**, a 32-bit 16 million colour computer with built-in CD-ROM drive. If you bought ACE 31 you could have won one! [ACE27]

• **HYPERGAMES** like Cosmic Osmo and Batman Digital Justice are paving the way for CD-I entertainment. [ACE24/30]

• **INTERACTIVE VIDEO TAPE**, an alternative to CD-I. [ACE26]

• **KONIX CONSOLE**, a powerful British console with revolutionary built-in joystick controller which could change into a steering wheel, motorbike handle or aeroplane yoke. Ultimately failed due to a lack of marketing money. Rumours suggest a new buyer is interested. [ACE18/25]

• **LIGHTSPEED SPRITES**, three researchers from Carnegie Mellon University, USA have developed an algorithm enabling them to generate graphical simulations of objects seen travelling at 99% of the speed of light. [ACE34]

• **MEDIA LAB**, Boston-based research institute with one simple brief – invent the future. People at this Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) facility are working on computer generated holograms, interactive computer newspapers and virtual reality man-machine interfaces. [ACE9]

• **NEO-GEO**, a new home- and arcade-based games console from SNK in Japan, with storage capacity for 64Mb games cartridges and IC card capability. ACE gave you an exclusive chance to win one in issue 34. [ACE32/34]

• **RENDERMAN**, the unique 3D graphics system by Pixar which creates polygons with photorealistic detail. [ACE35]

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THATCH KEEPS MUM

Mrs Thatcher announced her resignation on the very day that Blitter went to press – and the question, naturally, on everybody's lips was: now that Mrs T has relinquished the reins and responsibilities of government, will she have more time for playing games?

'Will she WHAT??' said a harrassed spokesman from the Home Office? Blitter repeated his question. 'Video games??', came the response, 'I'll have to get back to you on that one...'

We're waiting.

One of the unsung hazards of computer entertainment is overeating. Sit yourself in front of that screen with a dozen or so Indian dishes and a joystick and – you know how it feels – suddenly Heaven seems just a few light-years closer. I was all compassion then when Midatlantic Films invited me to view Channel 4's broadcast of the Oprah Winfrey Show discussing The Nintendo Phenomenon – just as US magazine National Enquirer informed us that Oprah has put on 69 pounds in weight and her 'disgusted boyfriend' has called off their romance. Good riddance, Oprah – stick with Mario.

Atari recently announced their operating results for the third quarter of 1990, with net income of \$3 million on sales of \$89.1 million. According to Sam Tramiel, 'The Atari TT030 system based on the Motorola 68030 microprocessor, which started shipping during the third quarter, has been well received. In addition, the Company is shipping an additional 9 software titles for the Lynx', which means that by Christmas there will be, wait for it, 17 games available (if you're lucky enough to find them). No mention of the ST, you notice. It's complete demise in the US, accompanied by its current poor showing in Europe against the Amiga, must be a good argument for an aggressive company like Atari to quietly forget all about it and concentrate on new machines, like the Panther (see page 7 of this issue).

THINK 8, THINK ACE!

Remember *OutRun*? The original conversion was really a colossal turkey in every sense of the word. It was a Christmas release that got dished up for the eager public just in time for stocking filling but, oops!, just too late for the magazines to review it in their Christmas issues.

By the middle of January, when the first reviews began trickling out, it was fairly clear that anyone who'd walked away with a copy was almost bound to be disappointed. There were even suggestions – surely untrue – that USGold had committed the unpardonable crime of actually withholding the product from the magazines for fear of getting poor marks and losing sales.

ACE HAPPY HOUR HOTLINE



Don't forget the ACE helpline if you want a quick response to something gamesy that's keeping you foxed. Just call our HAPPY HOUR HOTLINE on 071 251 6222 and ask for David Upchurch or Jim Douglas. If you've got a query about mail order or the readers pages, ask for Mel (that's her, above). The Hotline is open Monday-Friday 5pm-6pm, though we may ask you to call back if we're under heavy deadline pressure. Please note, we cannot accept calls outside the Happy Hour. We'd also like, at the risk of seeming a load of antisocial creeps, to remind callers that the purpose of the Hotline is to answer queries and not (you know who you are) to discuss that awful skin ailment you've got...

THEY SHALL BE CONSOLED...

AND GO TO PARIS...

AND GRAB SEGA FREEBIES...

Whatever the truth of this situation, USG suffered a lot of flak because of OutRun, though they've worked hard on quality since then to put their name back in lights.

So what's the point of all this reminiscing, eh? Well...have you noticed the absence of certain high profile Christmas releases in this issue? We certainly have. *Total Recall*, for one, is strangely overdue – the rumour is that the game was a major disappointment and has been sent back to the drawing board. Let's hope others follow this worthy example. If not, buyer beware.

Blit blit!

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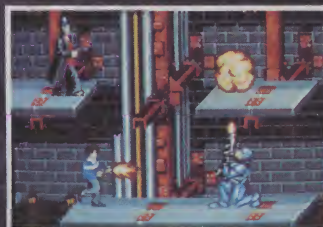
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